



# 2023

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## **Annual Report and Accounts**

Year ended 30 September





The Pedal to Paris  
fundraising event

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# Foreword



**Jason Coward**  
National Chair

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jason Coward', written in a cursive style.



**Mark Atkinson**  
Director General

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark Atkinson', written in a cursive style.

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“We saw a 35% increase in the number of beneficiaries and households that we supported. Key to this was our Cost of Living Grants programme. We are proud to say our response was quick and effective”

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**The world continues to change at pace**, with global conflict and economic instability leading to very real hardship for families in the UK, not least the most vulnerable in our Armed Forces community. As ever, the Royal British Legion strives to rise to those challenges, and despite difficult circumstances, we found new and effective ways to help our beneficiaries in 2023.

The cost-of-living crisis, fuelled by high inflation and energy costs, has had an undeniable impact on UK society. Yet just when our help has been needed most, the RBL – and the rest of the charity sector – has seen a drop in fundraising revenue. Budgets are tight and the public are understandably watching their spending.

However, healthy financial reserves have enabled us to continue to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community, and in 2023, we saw a 35% increase in the number of beneficiaries and households that we supported. Key to this was our Cost of Living Grants programme to help people with the increasing cost of bills. We are proud to say that our response was quick and effective, helping people of all ages across the length and breadth of the UK.

It is not lost on us that in 1921, we provided bread and coal to help those struggling in the aftermath of the First World War, and in 2023, we provided fuel and food vouchers, following the effects of the conflict in Ukraine. The basic need for food and warmth does not change, but we continue to work to make sure that our delivery evolves to meet the demands of modern life.

Last year, we spoke of the strategic planning needed to transform how we provide support. Work had begun on mapping out our Improving Beneficiary Journeys programme, and this year, that planning turned into practice, with investment in resourcing and the launch of a full training programme for staff to ensure better beneficiary experiences.

We also continued to invest in providing the best possible recovery for anyone in the Armed Forces community who has undergone life-changing injuries in military service. And this year, our support reached a new high as we sponsored, funded and managed Invictus Team UK for the first time, which culminated in September at the Games in Düsseldorf, Germany.

Through this programme, we were able to help young people and their families on their recovery journey. The year-long selection and training process was not so much about winning medals but about the path participants took to get there. And if it turns out that Invictus isn't right for someone, then we find them a recovery programme that is. No one is left behind.

We saw some important events in 2023, none more so than the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla on 6th May, in which we were honoured to participate. Also in May, it was the 60th anniversary of the last National Serviceman to be demobbed, and the participation of families at an event at the National Memorial Arboretum saw new people introduced to the RBL and what we do.

The anniversaries continued in June, when we marked 75 years since HMT *Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury Docks in Essex, and in July, when we held events to raise public awareness of 70 years since the end of the 'forgotten' Korean War.

Another proud moment in 2023 was the launch of our plastic-free poppy. It was the result of years of collaborative working and shows our determination to reduce single-use plastic, be more economical and lessen our impact on the environment. We hope you like it as much as we do.

Our campaigning work continues to bear fruit, particularly our Count Them In campaign for a question on veterans to be included in the 2021 Census. The Office for National Statistics has now published the information it has collected, and for the first time we have access to data that is critical in developing our understanding of veterans' needs. This is information that is useful not only to us as a charity, but also to the whole sector, including government. It reframes current decision-making and is crucial in informing future strategy, too.

We are also proud to have contributed to the creation of the Etherton report, which was published in July. This is the independent review into the military's pre-2000 ban on LGBT personnel, which ruined many people's lives. The RBL encouraged LGBT veterans to contribute to the review, and we submitted our own evidence of the appalling treatment of many service people, whose lives were shattered. We will make sure that those

## FOREWORD

affected by the ban are supported to apply for the compensation scheme.

Greater diversity and inclusion across the RBL itself is an objective that underpins all our work, and 2023 has seen us make great progress towards this goal. We look forward to building on it in the year to come.

As ever, our network of members continues to contribute incredible work in terms of Remembrance, local events and awareness, fundraising and looking after the local veteran community. They are passionate

and operate all over the world, which is what helps maintain our strength as an organisation. Unfortunately, our member numbers are still declining, so our Future of Membership programme continues to commit time and energy to increasing and revitalising our base for the future.

We have seen changes in our leadership over the past year, including a new National President, Vice Admiral Sir Clive Johnstone KBE CB. He replaced Lieutenant General James Bashall CB CBE, who had served his term in the role. Our Director General, Charles Byrne,

also stepped down in November 2023. And our Chief Operating Officer, Daniel Oppenheimer, left the RBL in October 2023. We are grateful for their dedication and hard work in making the RBL what it is today.

In a turbulent year for the UK, we are proud to say that we have seen a huge commitment from our staff, members, volunteers and supporters, who continue to help us change lives for the better. Our thanks and appreciation is heartfelt, and we look forward to making more progress in the years to come.

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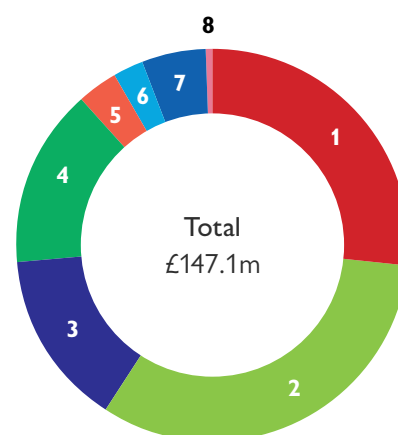
# Trustees' report

The Trustees present their report, including strategic review, and the audited financial statements of the Royal British Legion group and parent charity for the year ended 30th September, 2023. Details of the group structure can be found in the financial review on page 46 and in note 14 to the accounts.

## Financial overview

### Where the money comes from

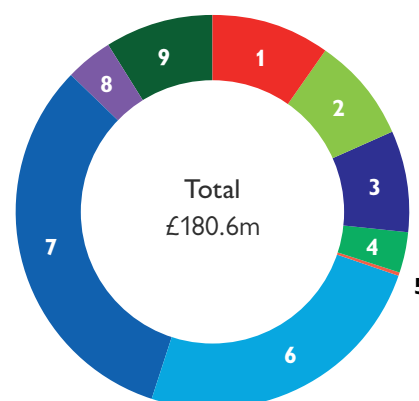
		£ million	%
1	The Poppy Appeal	39.3	26.7
2	Donations, legacies and events	47.7	32.5
3	Lotteries and trading	21.2	14.4
4	Fees charged to care home residents	21.6	14.7
5	Grants for welfare services and Remembrance	4.9	3.3
6	Membership subscriptions	4.0	2.7
7	Investment income	7.8	5.3
8	Other	0.6	0.4
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>147.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>



### Where the money goes

#### Operational costs

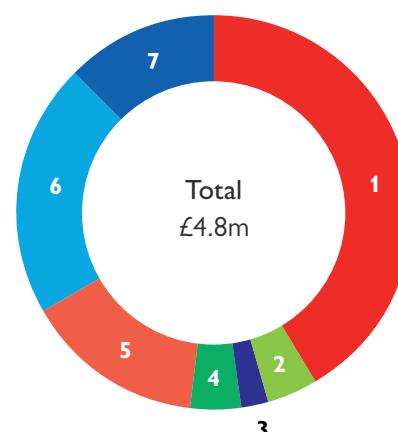
		£ million	%
1	The Poppy Appeal	15.9	8.8
2	Donations, legacies and events	15.9	8.8
3	Lotteries and trading	14.7	8.1
4	Remembrance	7.8	4.3
5	Comradeship	0.4	0.2
6	Care homes	48.0	26.6
7	Welfare services	53.2	29.5
8	Membership	10.7	5.9
9	Communication and campaigns	14.0	7.8
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL COSTS</b>		<b>180.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>



### Where the money goes

#### Capital costs

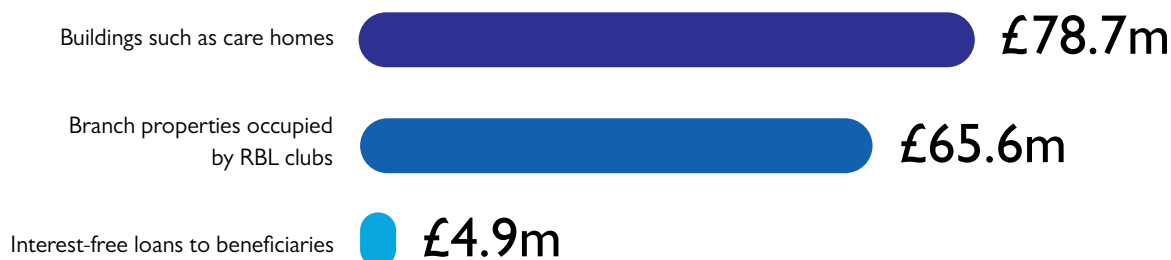
		£ million	%
1	Care homes	2.0	41.6
2	Improving IT infrastructure	0.2	4.2
3	Invictus Games equipment	0.1	2.1
4	Festival of Remembrance set	0.2	4.2
5	Lady Haig Poppy Factory	0.7	14.6
6	Poppy machines	1.0	20.8
7	National Memorial Arboretum development	0.6	12.5
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS</b>		<b>4.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>



# Funds and Reserves

The total funds of the RBL group are broken down into three categories: Not available to spend, Membership and Restricted Funds, and Available Unrestricted Funds. Our Reserves policy can be found on page 48. Full details of each type of fund can be found on pages 88-91.

## Not available to spend



**Subtotal of funds not available to spend: £149.2m**

## Membership and Restricted Funds



**Subtotal of Membership and Restricted Funds: £112.8m**

## Available Unrestricted Funds



**Subtotal of Available Unrestricted Funds: £88.5m**

Total Funds held by the RBL group

# £350.5m



# Services and support



Richard Davies,  
Invictus competitor at  
the Invictus Games,  
Düsseldorf, 2023

**The act of defending** and protecting the nation's democratic freedoms and way of life is rarely without cost to those who serve. Which is why we, the Royal British Legion, need to be there for them, particularly when times get tough.

This year, with the cost-of-living crisis, our Armed Forces community has seen some particularly challenging times. In response, our welfare services have been even more committed to providing life-changing support for the UK Armed Forces community at their time of need, with many staff going above and beyond their normal duties to make sure our beneficiaries get the best service.

#### Care services

Our six care homes continue to provide 24-hour residential, nursing, respite and day care for hundreds of elderly and very frail veterans and their dependants, as well as specialist support for individuals with dementia. We provide a unique environment that recognises and celebrates our residents' service to the country.

Despite the well-reported staffing and funding issues faced by the social-care sector in the UK, we continued to provide

high-quality care for the residents in our homes and for their families. We have made good progress in improving occupancy levels, seeing a rise to 81% (from 75% in 2022), while satisfaction levels were recorded at 97% for relatives and 98% for residents in our 2022 annual satisfaction survey.

Other highlights include Lister House gaining the Gold Standards Framework for end-of-life care for the first time, while Dunkirk Memorial House was re-accredited. All our homes have been involved in collaborative initiatives and research with local colleges, universities and NHS trusts, which were looking at areas such as veterans living with dementia, accessing social care for the LGBTQ community, and loneliness and isolation.

Our Admiral Nurse Service continues to provide personalised and holistic support to families of people living with dementia, helping 1,736 people on average per month. The service is expanding, using a blended approach of face-to-face and remote support. This, along with the eight new nurses who have been recruited over the past 12 months, enables us to reach more beneficiaries in need.



Jenny Hartley, Invictus competitor at the Invictus Games, Düsseldorf, 2023



The Admiral Nurse Service has also supported development within our care homes by delivering dementia training and assistance with the roll-out of dementia-care mapping, which helps us to measure and learn from the experience of people with dementia.

### Helping the Armed Forces community cope with the cost-of-living crisis

Last year, the rising cost of living, and particularly energy costs, saw parts of the Armed Forces community in extreme need. In response, we launched our Cost of Living Grants programme in October 2022, which allowed new beneficiaries to apply online for RBL funding assistance. Demand was extremely high, due in large part to a successful awareness-raising campaign. We provided grants of more than £5.1 million to more than 7,000 households, with applicants ranging in age from 19 to 90 years old. Feedback was very positive, with satisfaction scores at more than 95% and hundreds of heartfelt thank-you messages.

While the focus of the programme was help with energy costs, applicants with simple requests for clothing, food and household goods were also supported. The perceived anonymity of the online approach also enabled us to reach audiences who had never asked for help before – for example, we saw double the normal number of applicants from Northern Ireland.

### Regional casework and specialist advice

The RBL's casework is at the heart of our welfare services. We provide expert multi-need, multi-solution support on a case-by-case basis to meet individual circumstances. During 2023, we supported almost 27,000 people in need of help in the UK and 59 countries across the world. We awarded more than £18 million in grants to individuals (2022: more than £10 million), far exceeding previous years, which provided practical solutions for mobility, housing, household items and debt.

Of the beneficiaries who have been supported during 2023 by our Caseworking and Specialist teams, 87% state that we fully met their welfare needs, an increase of 4% from the previous year.

Our Outreach Service supported 1,080 beneficiaries during 2023, an increase of 33% from the previous year. We continue



Samantha Norris, Wellbeing Assistant at Dunkirk Memorial House, and Ron Winterbottom, resident of Dunkirk Memorial House and Royal Air Force veteran

to help beneficiaries with complex and often multiple needs, together with support from our expert partners. Our help in accessing this support is a lifeline to beneficiaries, who can find the process confusing and overwhelming to navigate.

The Veterans Hearing Fund assistance that we committed to in 2022 is now complete, and 567 people were provided with high-quality hearing aids. We are continuing to gather and analyse evidence to support our ongoing campaign to HM Government to establish a permanent fund to support veterans with poor hearing health.

Throughout the year, the RBL has continued to lead the group of Armed Forces charities that provide support to Afghan nationals who worked alongside the UK Armed Forces and have since resettled in the UK, following the withdrawal of HM Armed Forces from Afghanistan (May to August 2021). We arranged support for more than 1,200 families, assessing their most urgent needs and then referring them to Help for Heroes, the Forces Employment Charity and/or our own individual needs grants

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**“During 2023, we supported almost 27,000 people in need of help in the UK and 59 countries across the world and awarded more than £18 million in grants to individuals”**

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Below: Brian Garner  
with Admiral Nurse  
Claire Moorhouse

Opposite: Liz Davies, RBL  
helpline staff member



programme. More than 1,500 grants were awarded in 2023, and the programme will continue until October 2024 at least.

Our Benefits, Debt and Money Advice specialists supported more than 1,700 beneficiaries this year, helping them to access benefits, deal with debt and apply for RBL grants. Our now fully staffed team addressed more than £7 million of debt via insolvency applications and successfully worked with creditors to write off £370,000 of debt.

During 2023, our War Pensions service represented veterans at 1,354 tribunals, helping those who received compensation for an injury or illness due to their service to appeal, overturning previous decisions and increasing their award at tribunal. As a result, the financial awards for this year totalled £39 million, an increase of 37% from 2022. This includes 12 beneficiaries who have received awards that, over an anticipated lifetime, will pay more than £1 million, one beneficiary who received an award of more than £2 million, and another who received an award of more than £5 million.

#### **Progress against aims set out in our 2022 report**

Last year, we aimed to increase capacity in our Caseworking and Specialist teams, with a goal to support 10% more people than in 2022. To help meet this goal and to successfully support our One Legion strategy, we reviewed and restructured services, matching staff resources to case numbers to ensure good service levels.

The Outreach team, with the recruitment of more staff, exceeded our goal by supporting 33% more people. The Independent Living Service, which provides advice, support and advocacy to enable people to live independently, safely and well in their homes, or to transition to a more supported environment such as residential care, saw 25% more beneficiaries being supported. The Benefits, Debt and Money Advice team saw an increase of 12%, and they were finalists in the Institute of Money Advisers' Debt Team of the Year. Together, these services increased beneficiary reach by 20% against the previous year.

Overall, we have seen a 35% increase in the number of beneficiaries/households supported during the year, rising from approximately 20,000 to 27,000. Last year's pledge to provide financial help for the hardest-hit members of the UK Armed Forces, making support available

in person and online, was fulfilled not only by the expansion of our area Caseworking and Specialist teams, but also by the launch of our Cost of Living Grants programme. In recognition of the success of the scheme, we were finalists for Most Impactful Grant in the 2023 Association of Charitable Organisations awards. Our nomination was a testament to the RBL's One Legion approach in action – it would not have been possible without the support from departments across the whole organisation.

This year, we successfully completed the discovery and design phases of our programme to improve beneficiary journeys, to make it easier for people to reach out for help. Whatever route our beneficiaries take to get to our support, obtaining assistance from us will be more straightforward and centred around them. This does not mean the welfare services on offer will change, but the way beneficiaries access and experience them will.

For the first time, the RBL took full responsibility for the selection, training and support of Team UK, as well as their families and friends, for the Invictus Games, which took place in Düsseldorf in September 2023. We worked with 59 competitors on their recovery pathways to help them thrive while

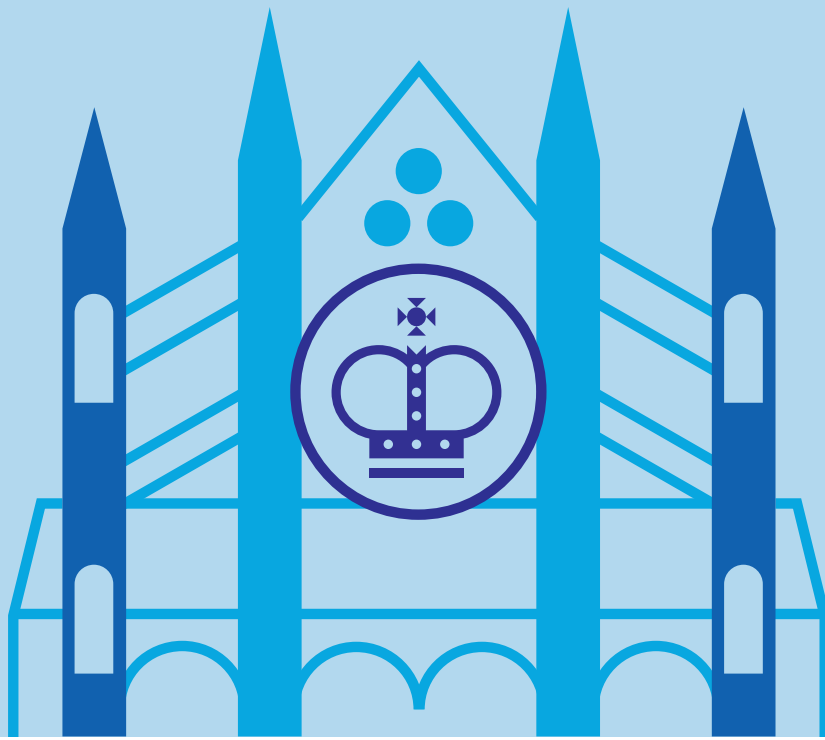
competing at the Games. Their individual and collective confidence and resilience grew throughout, which also had a positive impact on their family and friends.

While delivering a highly successful Games, the RBL Recovery team continuously looked for ways in which we can improve both the operational delivery and the beneficiary experience. We look forward to implementing improvements for Team UK on the road to Canada 2025.

Elsewhere in our work to support wounded, injured and sick serving personnel and veterans, the Battle Back Centre continued to deliver best-in-class recovery courses, with 34 taking place in 2023, reaching 611 beneficiaries. We are looking forward to expanding the number of courses during 2024 and piloting new programmes.

In our care homes, we aimed to introduce electronic care planning, new electronic medication-management systems and nurse call systems. The first phase, introducing electronic care planning and digital reception systems, has been successfully implemented at all our care homes, with the second phase well underway.





# 100

## Standard Bearers

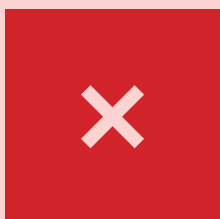
lined the procession route for the coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla, and we helped 1,000 veterans and their families attend the event

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# 2023

## in numbers

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MPs voted the RBL's charity campaigning as the third most effective in Westminster



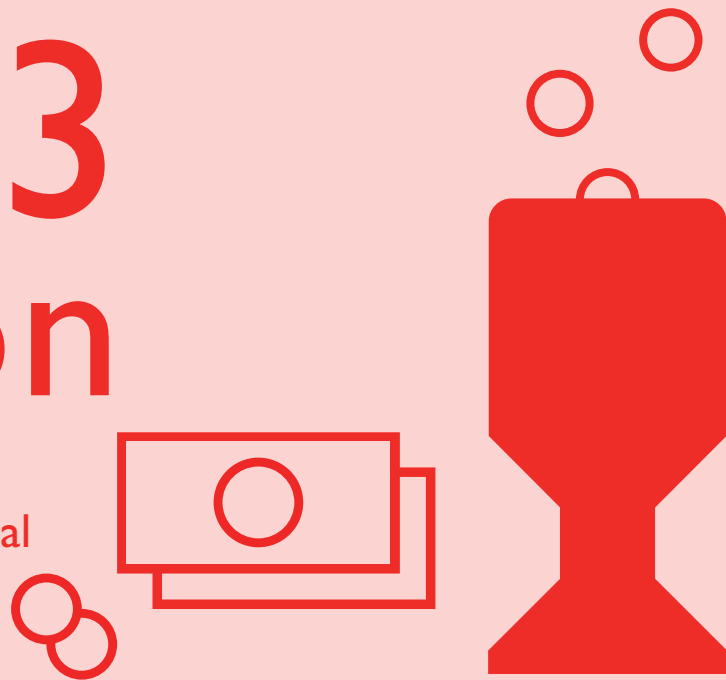
We arranged support for more than

## 1,200 families

of Afghan military personnel who have resettled in the UK, awarding them more than 1,500 grants

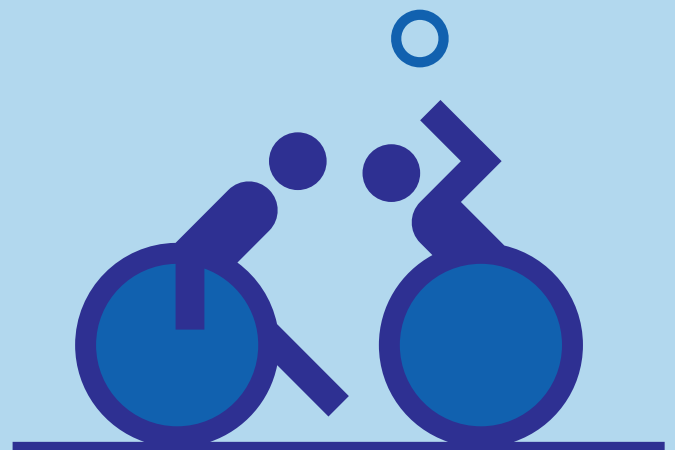
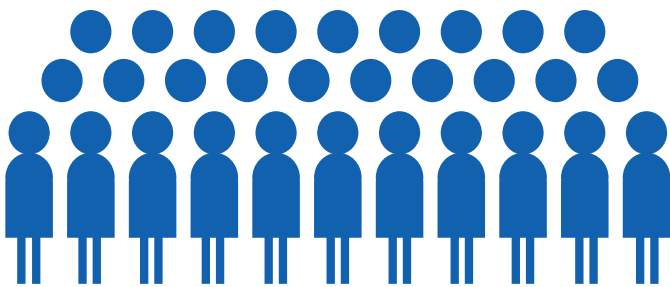
# £39.3 million

was raised through  
the 2022 Poppy Appeal



## More than 430,000 pupils

engaged with our Remembrance  
learning programme through physical and  
online events and downloadable materials



## 611

beneficiaries undertook our recovery  
courses at the Battle Back Centre, and  
we also supported the 59 Invictus  
Games Team UK competitors

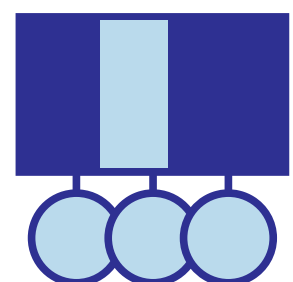
We helped 7,621  
beneficiaries with  
Cost of Living  
Grants totalling

## £5.1 million



## 700

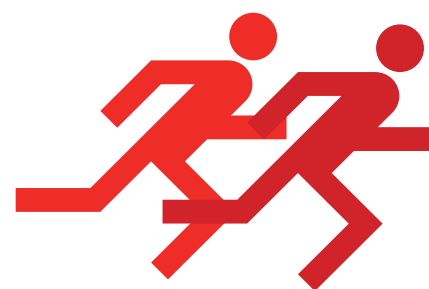
guests attended  
our Korea 70  
event





# £106.8 million

in total was  
raised through  
all fundraising  
activities



## 100,000

new supporters engaged  
with us through donating,  
running, sponsoring  
and purchasing



We represented  
veterans at

## 1,354

tribunals, resulting  
in War Pensions  
awards of  
£39 million, an  
increase of 37%  
from last year

Our new 100% paper  
poppy has a

## 40%

smaller carbon  
footprint



We supported almost

## 27,000

people in need through  
our casework



# Ambassador stories



## John Parkes

(pictured on page 17)

John is an Army veteran who served in 3 Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's) between 1991 and 1994. He loved his time in service and worked as a Battalion Cook before being demobbed. He went on to have a career as a truck driver, and joined the Rugeley Branch of the RBL, becoming Welfare Officer and Chair.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, John developed charcot foot syndrome – a deterioration of bones and soft tissue in the foot. Lockdowns made diagnosis slow, and in December 2021, his lower leg was amputated.

Although it was a relief not to be in constant pain any more, John struggled with his mental health. His life had completely changed. "I couldn't provide for my family, I couldn't get upstairs in our home to shower or go to the toilet. I was having to be taken to the local leisure centre to use their disabled facilities. It was also a struggle to attend social events."

However, his connections at the local RBL branch recommended that he contact the Welfare team in the West Midlands, who could provide support and advice.

John says: "I was put in touch with a case officer called Caroline, who was outstanding with her level of empathy and support. I talked through my worries and what I was struggling with. I didn't have a clue about what I was eligible for, as I had never claimed any support before."

The RBL was able to help John with heating bills, food shopping and a perching stool for the shower, and even supported him in his applications for a mobility car and his Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Caroline also stepped in to put John's case to the council for moving the family to a suitable bungalow.

Then it was suggested that he apply to go on a veterans' multi-activity course run by the RBL's Battle Back Centre in Shropshire. John says: "I didn't really know what to expect and was quite apprehensive, but as soon as we were thrown into wheelchair basketball, all my worries melted away. Being an amputee wasn't going to hinder my experience there one bit!

"I threw myself into all the activities. The staff were great at ensuring I was feeling comfortable and were able to really boost my confidence. I came back just buzzing.

"My partner immediately saw the difference in me. I was positive and determined to make changes in my life. I can't speak highly enough of my experience there, and for this to be available to all veterans is just amazing."

John has now joined his local wheelchair rugby team, volunteers for the Help a Squaddie charity, conducts talks at an amputee support group and enjoys going to the gym and swimming. He is due to return to Battle Back in the coming months.

"If it wasn't for the RBL, I genuinely don't know how we would have coped. I was so reluctant to ask for help as a veteran, but that is what the RBL is there for."

## Alison Jeatt

(pictured below)

Alison's husband, Alan, served in the Royal Navy for 25 years – she describes him as "a naval man through and through". They met in Llandudno, Wales, while Alan's ship was doing a home tour. Six months later, they were married.

Nowadays, Alison has a tough time with arthritis in her spine. She's also had two knee replacements and suffers with diabetes, angina and fibromyalgia. She says, "A lot of days aren't good and I'm regularly in pain."

When Alison started to find her gravelled garden tricky to walk on, her brother, also a Navy man, suggested that she call the RBL. She couldn't do basic things such as hanging out her washing – or even enjoy

being outside. Alison and Alan had been given some paving slabs to redo the garden, but they couldn't afford the £1,500 cost to install them.

Alison says, "Initially, we thought we didn't need it. But the more I thought about it, the more I realised I was only going to get worse as I got older." Alison was worried about falling over in the garden and seriously hurting herself. "So I rang the RBL, and they paid the £1,500 for us to redo our garden, which was just marvellous."

Alison also has trouble walking, and it was stopping her from leaving the house. She approached her doctor for a wheelchair, but although the NHS offered one to her, its limited battery pack meant it would still need to be pushed up hills.

"Where I live in Devon, it's very hilly – our home is at the top of a hill, and Alan is 72 now, so he couldn't push me," she says. "I went to the RBL and they said they'd help."

In October 2022, with funding from the NHS, the RBL and the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, Alison received a fully electric wheelchair, and it's transformed her life. "Our youngest daughter bought us a National Trust membership, but we couldn't use it because I couldn't get around the grounds. But this has made such a massive difference," she says.

"We've been for walks on the prom and had lunches out. I also did my Christmas shopping in town for the first time in three years, rather than ordering things online. It's given me back my independence."







### **Tilly Fisher**

*(pictured above)*

Tilly officially joined the British Army in 2004, following a recruitment drive in her home country of Fiji. From 5,000 applicants, Tilly was one of only 50 – around 15 of them women – to get through the first round. After training, Tilly was posted out to Iraq for her first overseas tour. She says: “It was scary and dangerous, but being there with my comrades was unlike anything I had done before.”

Tilly also did two tours of Afghanistan. During her time out there with the 2 Rifles, her company suffered the loss of 11 of their own. “There is no time to grieve and no time to reflect – you just had to carry on with the job at hand, and your emotions went on to autopilot,” she says.

Tilly was discharged from the Army with a knee injury. She played in the women’s rugby union and league teams, which helped with her mental health but resulted in physical damage. She left in 2016, and one month later, she was also diagnosed with PTSD.

She struggled with civilian life. Keeping appointments and arriving at job interviews on time were hard because of her PTSD symptoms. She managed to stay fit and that was what led her to look into the Invictus Games, for which Team UK selection and training is run by the RBL.

She was invited to a pre-selection camp, and happily, was successful. She competed with Team UK in Düsseldorf in 2023, winning gold in powerlifting. “Being part of Team UK was the ultimate motivation on my recovery journey,” she says.

For Tilly, it’s the friendships and sense of belonging, rather than the medals, that will stay with her. “The camaraderie within Team UK and with the other nations was so inspirational,” she says. “Our days were filled with cheering, laughter and dancing – and tears of sadness and joy.”

The experience has also given her the confidence to pursue coaching opportunities in powerlifting and possibly apply for the Invictus Games another year. “Recovery through sports is certainly a game-changer, both physically and mentally, and to do it with Team UK Class of 2023 is an honour.”

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**“Recovery through sports is certainly a game-changer, both physically and mentally, and to do it with Invictus Team UK is an honour”**

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# Remembrance



The Festival of  
Remembrance on 12th  
November, 2022 at the  
Royal Albert Hall, London



### **This year, we reviewed our research**

into the connection that exists between the Armed Forces and the British public and considered how our Remembrance activities can strengthen this, so that the vital contribution of the Armed Forces community is never forgotten.

This review informed our new Remembrance strategy, which ensures that remembering those who served and continue to serve within the Armed Forces is at the heart of all our work. This is done through year-round engagement – daily at the National Memorial Arboretum and periodically through Remembrance events and programmes.

Ultimately, we want to make sure that remembering can take place at all times, within all spaces and by everyone: Remembrance for All.

### **Delivering on our 2022 aim and bringing Remembrance for All to life**

It was clear that we needed not just to deepen our relationship with our heartland audience, but also widen it to include their families and communities, too.

On Tuesday 16th May, 2023, we held a Remembrance event at the National Memorial Arboretum to mark 60 years since the last National Serviceman was demobbed. In the spirit of our new approach, we asked the public to find out from their fathers, uncles, grandfathers and great-grandfathers if they had taken part in National Service, and to encourage them all to join us for afternoon tea. We welcomed more than 700 veterans, their families and invited guests, many of whom had never attended an RBL event before. The RBL Outreach team at the Arboretum had 153 meaningful welfare conversations with new beneficiaries at the event. The team reported that wider family attendance was key to facilitating this, which shows how Remembrance for All and its inclusive approach is key to locating new beneficiaries.

We took a slightly different approach as we marked 70 years since fighting in the Korean War came to an end with the signing of the armistice, but still had the aim of facilitating 'all' to remember. We worked closely with the Korean Embassy to hold an event for veterans and their families on Horse Guards Parade in London on Thursday 27th July, 2023. Aware of the power of veteran testimony, we encouraged members of the public to join us to watch the service and learn first-hand about the 'Forgotten War'

from those who were there. It was a privilege to listen to veterans and hear the letters they wrote home to their loved ones. In attendance were 250 veterans and guests, 250 descendants, 70 bereaved family members and 170 invited guests. Their feedback afterwards told us that they felt recognised and remembered.

With accessibility and inclusivity in mind, we engaged new, more diverse audiences through our work with partners such as the National Windrush Museum. Together, we worked to honour the service and sacrifice of the Caribbean Second World War veterans who arrived at Tilbury Docks in Essex on HMT *Empire Windrush* to rebuild Britain 75 years ago, and the thousands more who followed.

We also worked with the Memorial Gates Council to mark Commonwealth Day at an event with a Windrush theme in London on Monday 13th March, 2023. The keynote speaker was well-known British journalist Clive Myrie, who told the audience of his heritage as a descendant of the Windrush generation, highlighting their service and sacrifice within the British Armed Forces.

Our relationship with Black History Month also continued, as we worked together to tell stories of servicewomen of Black heritage, one of whom recounted her experience of being proud to serve, with LGBTQ also being part of her identity.

This year, we refocused our learning programme, teaching new generations about the importance of the Armed Forces in terms of service and sacrifice.

The programme engaged with hundreds of schools and approximately 430,000 pupils across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 through physical events, online events and downloadable materials. Our activities align closely with the National Curriculum and provide relevant, engaging and accessible resources to help children understand and take part in Remembrance.

Our 2023 online Remembrance Live assembly engaged more than 340,000 attendees from across the country, and our free Learning Days at the National Memorial Arboretum welcomed 1,500 children from 22 surrounding schools. For these, we offer travel bursaries to schools with a high percentage of children who qualify for the pupil premium.

The National Memorial Arboretum's learning programme has similarly been

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**“Ultimately, we want to make sure that remembering can take place at all times, within all spaces and by everyone – Remembrance for All”**

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“We continue to build on the successes of this year and engage our audiences in appropriate ways for us to move closer to them”

refocused, with core sessions updated to align with shifts in society, the National Curriculum and learning objectives. The programme reached 20,000 young people in 2023 and now includes interactive learning events coinciding with national commemorations such as Holocaust Day, World Book Day and International Women's Day.

This approach not only attracts new schools but also broadens educational opportunities by incorporating arts and culture, and facilitating cross-curricular activities to deepen understanding. To eliminate travel barriers and extend our reach to priority areas, in 2023, we introduced in-school workshops for National Service 60, Windrush 75 and Remembrance, which reached more than 3,500 pupils.

#### **Core Remembrance activity**

Our core Remembrance events in November 2022, such as the Festival of Remembrance and veteran March Past the Cenotaph, had a strong presence and were at full capacity for the first time since the pandemic. At the Festival, we were joined by His Majesty King Charles III, and the event opened with a poignant tribute to Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which was a powerful moment shared by the British Royal Family and all in attendance at the Royal Albert Hall.

RBL Standard Bearers were on parade for the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla on Saturday 6th May, 2023 outside Westminster Abbey. They will receive a Coronation Medal for their participation in this significant historical moment. On the day, the RBL was represented by 19 veterans and RBL National President Lieutenant General James Bashall CB CBE in Westminster Abbey. We worked with the government to welcome nearly 1,000 veterans and their guests to watch the Coronation procession from grandstands located outside Buckingham Palace.

#### **National Memorial Arboretum**

The National Memorial Arboretum faced challenging operating circumstances, particularly in the latter part of the year, which had an impact on visitor numbers, and it ended the year having welcomed almost 278,000. Challenges were caused by adverse weather, particularly over the key summer holiday period, consumer

confidence due to the rise in the cost of living, and significant long-term traffic disruption in the vicinity of the Arboretum.

The biggest impact was felt in the day-visitor operation, but the Arboretum's group and hospitality business has continued to grow and has received several leisure and tourism awards over the year.

The Arboretum continues to develop its visitor programme, seeking new ways to engage people with Remembrance year-round and reflecting the themes of our wider Remembrance programming. This includes Windrush 75 and building partnerships with regional community groups, such as those that came together for Carnival Windrush in August.

The New World school-holiday activity also took inspiration from the experiences of the Windrush generation and National Servicemen, and successfully attracted first-time visitors. The popular Winter Light Trail illuminated Arboretum installations recalled the loss of British lives during the Falklands conflict and invited visitors to place a light to remember a loved one, alongside more uplifting, colourful displays.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester led the annual Armistice Day Service at the Armed Forces Memorial. Afterwards, they completed the planting of the Arboretum's Queen's Green Canopy project, an avenue of native trees on newly donated land that significantly enhances the approach to the Arboretum.

Alongside events, the daily on-site activities that capture visitors' interest have been reviewed. Relevantly themed trails have successfully introduced visitors to different areas of the site and have enabled them to engage with corresponding daily activities. An extended dwell time not only increases our storytelling opportunities, but also leads to increased secondary spend in the coffee shop, restaurant and shop.

We continue to build on the successes of this year and engage our external audiences in appropriate ways for us to move closer to them. We endeavour to deliver important Remembrance messaging and events, and, through them, promote the RBL and all that it is able to offer.



The March Past the Cenotaph  
on Remembrance Sunday,  
13th November, 2022



The RBL marked 60 years since  
the end of National Service at the  
National Memorial Arboretum  
on 16th May, 2023



# Introducing our plastic-free poppy







**The 2023 Poppy Appeal**, which launched after the year-end in October 2023, saw the successful introduction of the Royal British Legion's first-ever plastic-free poppy, made entirely from paper and recyclable through normal household collections. It has been the biggest redesign of the iconic poppy in 28 years.

The damaging impact of plastic pollution has become more widely recognised: in the EU, up to 85% of marine litter is believed to be plastic, with single-use items representing half of that total. The RBL decided to address its own plastic usage and make a positive impact by creating a more sustainable poppy.

As with many significant new initiatives, the journey to plastic free was not without its challenges. The initial process was interrupted by the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020, and once the first poppy designs were in, they looked nothing like the traditional one, so the designers went back to the drawing board. The final poppy retains the familiar two-petal shape and embossed letters at the centre, but it was made entirely without plastic.

To make the poppy more sustainable, a bespoke paper was developed using a combination of 50% renewable wood fibre (from sustainable forestry) and 50% recycled material (offcuts from the production of disposable coffee cups).

The new paper was found to be the best at holding the green and red colours, as

well as having the strength, fade resistance and colour fastness of the traditional poppy. Using this material also made the new poppy lighter and easier to store.

Experts tested the colourfastness of the plastic-free poppy by placing samples on a range of materials, simulating a rain shower and drying them at 60°C, to check the poppy did not 'bleed'. The durability of the new poppy was also verified, with testers submerging it in water to simulate it falling into a puddle, and wearing it during a range of everyday activities, including dog walking, mowing the lawn, cooking and jogging.

It's a project that could not have happened without working in collaboration with others. Expertise from different parts of the RBL and its partners – including Poppyscotland, the Lady Haig Poppy Factory and the Poppy Factory in Richmond – was combined to brilliant effect in one of the biggest projects worked on together to date.

The RBL also collaborated with external partners, including researchers from University College London (UCL). Professor Paola Lettieri (FREng), from UCL's Department of Chemical Engineering, conducted a lifecycle assessment on the new poppy to understand the environmental impacts of the change in materials.

She explains: "We were delighted to be invited to assess the plastic-free poppy's environmental impact and to suggest how

it could be made more sustainable. We looked at its carbon footprint and factors such as how much water and resources go into making it. By replacing the single-use plastic with a paper-based construction and increasing the amount of recycled paper used, UCL found that the new poppy design has a 40% smaller carbon footprint and a similar reduction in its overall impact on the environment."

Even though the new paper poppy was launched at the 2023 Poppy Appeal, stocks of the traditional poppy were not wasted, and both were available to the public. The RBL also scrapped the use of plastic in other poppy products where possible.

And the work doesn't stop there. The RBL hopes to make its poppy wreath plastic free, too. So far, there has been a 10% reduction in plastic by using a thinner base and paper petals.

For the teams involved, seeing the new design come to fruition has been exciting and humbling in equal measure. The RBL is proud to have developed a plastic-free poppy that will serve as a more sustainable symbol of Remembrance for the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces community. We are listening to feedback and will respond with design updates where feasible.

We want to encourage more engagement with Remembrance among audiences who are interested in sustainability issues, and we hope this will open up new strands of support for the charity.



# Campaigns, policy and research



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**“This year, we have contributed to major government reviews, providing expert input towards improving the services our community receives”**

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**The Royal British Legion** has a strong campaigning heritage, and 2023 is a year to be proud of. Our campaign work results in positive outcomes for the Armed Forces community, making sure their voices are heard in discussion and debates with politicians and policymakers across the country.

In 2023, the Campaigns, Policy and Research (CPR) team has attended and held events in Westminster, the Scottish Parliament and at the main political-party conferences. We represent the RBL in many Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Cobseo (The Confederation of Service Charities) working groups, to make sure our beneficiaries feature at the heart of decision-making. We also nurture relationships, maintaining close contact with all UK administrations, as well as making sure that more than 450 councillors regularly hear about our work through our Councillor Network. Our efforts are noted, and this year, MPs voted the RBL's charity campaigning the third most effective in Westminster.

This year, we have delivered consultation responses and evidence submissions to government departments, parliamentary committees, the devolved administrations and local government, providing insight into the lives of current and ex-service personnel and their families. This has led to practical changes, including several councils altering their policies to make sure that military compensation does not count as income in means tests for local benefits.

We have also contributed to major government reviews, including the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Quinquennial Review, and a review of Veterans' Welfare Services, providing expert input towards improving the services our community receives.

### **The Armed Forces Covenant**

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation that the Armed Forces community should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services, with special provision made in appropriate cases for those who have sacrificed most. It is the foundation of the RBL's campaigning and influencing activity.

In November 2022, local health, education and housing services were given a legal duty to take the promise of the Covenant into account. That greater awareness has led to early signs of positive change, as evidence presented by the RBL to

the Defence Select Committee in May 2023 showed. In submissions to the MOD and the Defence Secretary, the RBL has continued to call for the extension of the Covenant Duty to all areas of policy and national and devolved governments.

### **Supporting the Etherton report**

The Etherton report, published in July 2023, detailed the terrible prejudice and mistreatment that many LGBTQ veterans faced during a ban on homosexuals in the Armed Forces between 1967 and 2000. To give the review our full support, we collected and submitted evidence, as well as encouraging our community to submit their own.

Welcoming the publication of the report, the RBL's then-Director General, Charles Byrne, said, “We condemn the mistreatment the LGBTQ community experienced and are urging the government to accept the recommendations of the report in full. We welcome the Prime Minister's landmark apology. We believe the service and sacrifice of the LGBTQ Armed Forces community should be rightfully recognised and honoured.

“The Royal British Legion will play its role in supporting veterans affected by the ban. We want members of the community to know they are a vital part of our Armed Forces and our organisation, and we are here to provide support to anyone who needs it.”

We are actively working to improve the RBL's provision for the LGBTQ Armed Forces community through a range of development and communication activities with staff, trustees and volunteers, to ensure our working culture and services are fully inclusive. A key part of our work will be to build on our engagement with our staff and branch LGBTQ networks in these activities.

### **Hearing loss**

This year, we began a new research project with the University of Chester Westminster Centre for Research in Veterans to understand more about hearing loss in veterans, how common it is and how it affects work, wellbeing and families. The project will be steered by a group of people with wide-ranging professional and lived experience, including the NHS, Royal College of General Practitioners, law, military psychiatry, charities, academia and the MOD, as well as veterans with hearing difficulties. It will report late in 2024.



### **Credit their Service**

The cost of living has affected us all; however, some in the Armed Forces community with low incomes face an extra pressure on their finances. If you receive military compensation, it can be included in benefit means tests, causing veterans and their families to miss out on thousands of pounds of support every year.

In a bid to challenge this unfair treatment, the RBL launched a new campaign, Credit their Service, in 2023. It aims to help the cause of 100,000 veterans and their families who receive compensation awarded by the government for the pain and loss they endured in service to HM Armed Forces. This compensation is considered income when determining eligibility for many benefits, while civil compensation awarded by courts, such as personal injury or medical-negligence compensation, is exempt.

The treatment of military compensation within means tests varies widely: Universal Credit fully disregards all military compensation, while Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Disabled Facilities Grants all consider military compensation as income.

Pension Credit offers a lifeline for those over State Pension age whose income is below the minimum amount the UK government says you need to live on. When military compensation awards are treated as income, some of our poorest veterans and their families are pushed beyond the threshold for Pension Credit, missing out on thousands of pounds of support that civilians can access.

Local council support, such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants can also be affected. At the time of our initial Freedom of Information request, four in five (80%) of British councils treated military compensation as income.

Through our campaign, 12 local authorities have so far agreed to change their policies to ensure that they fully disregard military compensation as income within means tests. We will continue to campaign to reverse these unfair policies.

### **Veteran Friendly Framework for care homes**

In May 2023, we established a project to develop a Veteran Friendly Framework (VFF) for care homes, in partnership with Royal Star & Garter and the Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA).

The project will tackle loneliness and isolation, and deliver improved health and wellbeing for more than 25,000 veterans who live in care homes across the country.

The VFF is a two-year collaboration, with funding support from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, and follows on from the veteran-friendly accredited GP practice scheme and the VCHA NHS accreditation scheme. It aims to better support the practical, emotional and social needs of the Armed Forces community in residential care homes, providing them with training and resources to assess and improve their offer. Care providers will need to meet eight standards to complete their accreditation. These include being able to identify veterans' and their partners' wellbeing needs by ensuring that Armed Forces status is included in care planning, signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant and providing signposting to local statutory and charitable support services.

Only around 20 of the 15,000 care homes in the UK offer specific support to those who have served in the Armed Forces. Most veterans are cared for in civilian homes that, in some cases, may not fully understand their social, emotional or physical needs.

The exciting potential of this project is to raise the standards of care received by all members of the Armed Forces community living in all care homes. We want to showcase the thought and creativity that goes into care for veterans in veteran-specific care homes, such as the RBL's own homes, so it can be shared across the wider sector.

### **Progress against aims set out in our 2022 report**

#### **The Census gives us a clearer picture of need**

Following the success of the RBL's Count Them In campaign, a question was included in the Census for England and Wales in 2021 (and Scotland in 2022), recording the number of veterans for the first time. This year, the Campaigns, Policy and Research team has delivered on one of our aims for 2022 and used this data to produce a clearer picture of the demographic profile and needs of the Armed Forces community.

We now have density maps of veteran and family locations across England and Wales; an understanding of veteran age, gender and ethnicity; the number and location of veterans who live in care homes; the (higher

than average) proportion of veterans who are carers; and the number of veterans who live with a disability and whose children or spouses/partners have disabilities.

This information has helped us to see where our community needs help. Additional needs, such as an increased risk of musculoskeletal issues and hearing impairment, alcohol misuse, anxiety and depression, and experience of partner violence and abuse, are clear.

These findings will allow the RBL to better plan its services to meet the needs of the Armed Forces community where support is needed. We have also shared information across the military charity sector and with the Office for Veterans' Affairs and the MOD, to enable us all to reflect on how we can better serve those who served us.

### **Supporting those who serve us – general election manifesto 2024**

We also promised to build a general election manifesto that makes the case for a better deal for our Armed Forces community. Following extensive research and consultation, our 2024 general election manifesto presents a series of practical ideas to significantly improve the lives of the Armed Forces community as they face increased living costs and difficulties accessing public services.

The RBL's priorities for the next government are as follows:

1. Extend the Armed Forces Covenant Duty to UK and devolved governments, covering all policy areas.
2. Encourage public bodies to identify veterans and family members when delivering services, to provide tailored support.
3. Make sure military compensation is never considered as income for welfare-benefit means tests.
4. Introduce a national protocol for consistent access to services, and increase special educational needs and disability support funding for Armed Forces families.
5. Remove barriers for families of non-UK service personnel, waiving fees for Leave to Remain and the Minimum Income Requirement.

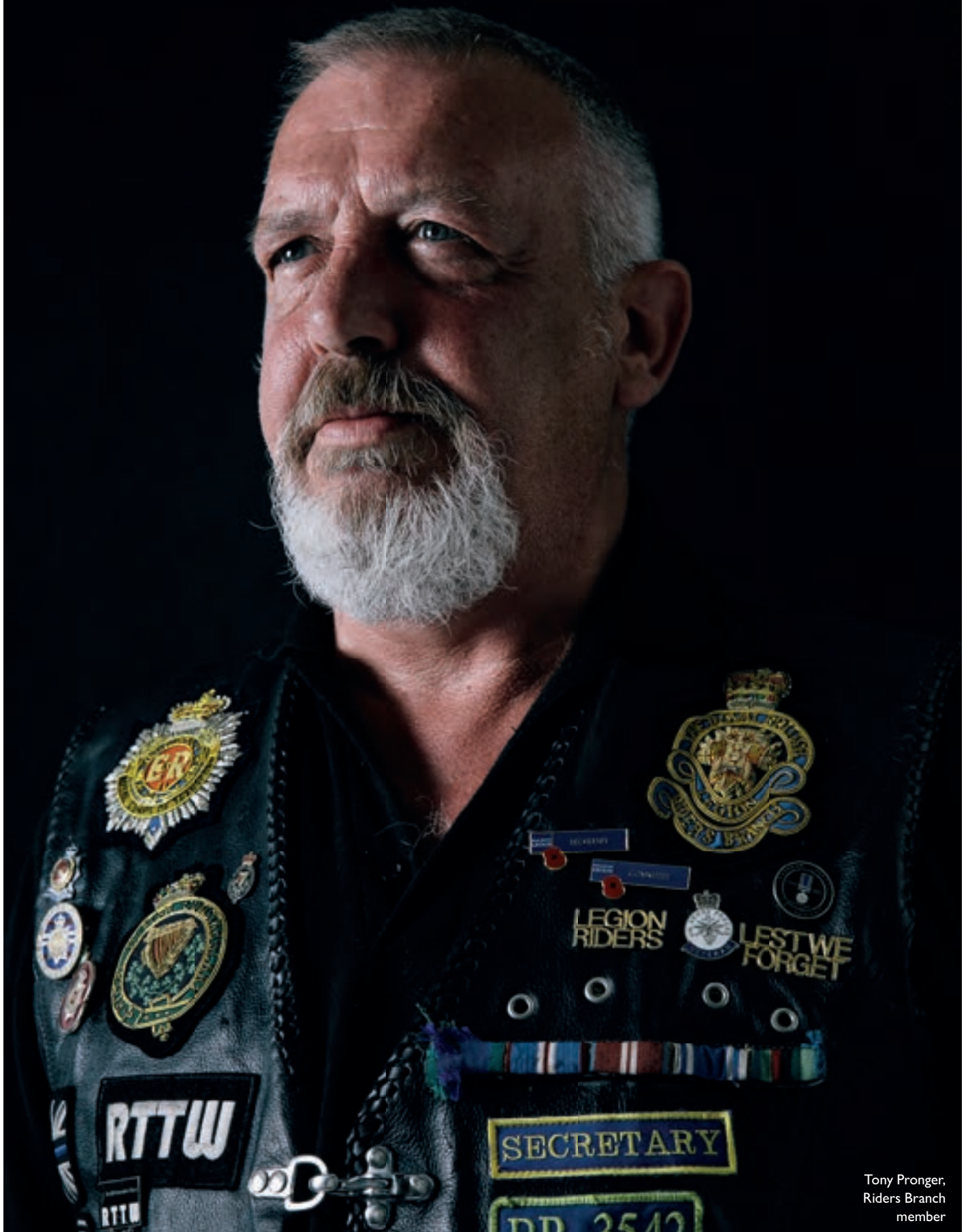
We have engaged with politicians of all parties to ensure they understand why these measures would transform the lives of the Armed Forces community, and we look forward to working with the next UK government to deliver these policy changes.



Adam Sefton,  
Regimental Engagement  
Mentoring Support  
Officer for the British  
Yeomanry, with his  
sons, Lennon and Mac



# Membership



Tony Pronger,  
Riders Branch  
member

**Membership exists** so our Armed Forces family have friends and allies standing by them in every community. Alongside offering that comradeship, our members actively take part in Remembrance, fundraising, local welfare and campaigns.

We have just under 195,000 members, 2,260 branches and 374 clubs. Over the past year, one of our areas of focus has been to build on all the good work delivered through our branches and to make the overall membership experience better.

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**“Over the past year, one of our areas of focus has been to build on all the good work delivered through our branches and to make the overall membership experience better”**

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We began by bringing our Membership Engagement team and the Central Services team together into a reorganised membership directorate with a new senior management team in place. We now have specialist teams in place to support the wider membership as well as the Membership Council and its various subcommittees and working groups. They also help to deliver events, training, compliance and communications, as well as the membership helpline, to members, branches and clubs.

On a local level, there are now five teams, which each have a regional Membership Engagement Manager, Membership Engagement Officers and a Membership Engagement Administrator. We also have a team that covers Northern Ireland, the

Republic of Ireland, Wales, the Women's Section and national branches.

Together, these groups make up our Membership Engagement team, there to support our county and branch networks as they organise local events and activities. The team is also there to encourage members to resolve issues locally and advise on other branch matters, as set out in the Membership Management Handbook.

### **Progress against aims set out in 2022**

We said there would be a particular focus on improving branch compliance, and now the new team is in place, we are able to provide dedicated support and advice to counties, branches and RBL teams. As a result, we have already seen a 3% improvement in branch compliance (Annual Returns), achieving 86%. There is more work to do, and we look forward to updating the membership on more initiatives planned in this area.

Other highlights brought about by these changes include:

- For our long-standing members, a 3% improvement in our retention rate, achieving 93.7%
- 6% growth in national branches membership
- 45% growth in youth members
- an easier process for overseas branches to make international payments
- membership training has been moved into the Learning and Development team, with a new and improved policy and procedures, and new training content.

We also said we would build on our support for successful branches with a focus on Branch Community Support (BCS). Our BCS programme transferred to the Membership Directorate in March and has been simplified into three areas: telephone calls, home visits and hospital visits. We would like to extend our thanks to our Branch Community Supporters for their understanding when we paused the BCS programme from May to August while we reviewed the training in terms of approach and content. We now have a much-improved offer in place, with a standardised training programme and a suite of materials available for Branch Community Supporters.

As a result of these developments, we improved our BCS service by:

- supporting 20% more beneficiaries
- increasing our numbers of Branch Community Supporters from 723 to 1,010 (39% increase)

The BCS developments have been led by the BCS working group, who ensure that a clear picture of need is viewed and the best possible service delivered.

As included in our 2022 aims, we also continued to explore what membership means, both to improve the experience and attract younger and more diverse members.

In August, we developed new recruitment materials, enabling branches to capture members' interest early on before taking them through the joining process. This material will be available in January 2024.

That said, we know there is more work to do. Our anniversary renewal rates are much lower than group renewals, which continues to highlight the challenges in retaining our newer and younger members, so our overall membership numbers are still in decline.

We are continuing to develop a more sustainable membership model that will attract a new audience. Priorities include offering individual membership (not just branch) and a more interactive digital experience that builds on and complements our established branches and clubs.

We were pleased to secure Membership Council support for our approach in August, followed by positive feedback at the September County Chairs seminar. This has now enabled us to push forwards with a more detailed design phase as we continue to engage with membership through a series of online regional roadshows.

Annual Conference 2023 was held in May in Torquay, and was an in-person and online event. There were 443 branch delegates, 42 county delegates and 459 visitors, along with 104 VIPs, Standard Bearers, Parade Marshals and RBL staff. This totals 782 in-person and 266 virtual attendees.

# Volunteers and staff



Volunteers at a Poppy Walk



**This year has seen** a significant step forward in our efforts to evolve our culture, to ensure we achieve our strategic goals and progress the ways we work to meet the needs of our customers and colleagues.

### Progress against our 2022 aims

Following an independent review of the current culture across all aspects of the Royal British Legion, we received some strong insights on our strengths and areas for development. Since then, we have begun work on a programme that aims to remove silos and create more collaborative working practices.

To reduce conflict and build stronger relationships right across the RBL, we are working to upskill colleagues and members in early resolution and intervention. We are also creating a set of behavioural principles that show our commitment to colleagues, members and partners, and our expectations of how we will work together. We will also build stronger alignment between our senior leaders and Trustees.

This work and more will follow over the coming months and years. Our staff survey provided strong insights too on how engaged our staff and volunteers are with the RBL, with an overall engagement score of 72%.

In what is also a key aim for this year, we have made great progress towards making the RBL more inclusive and diverse than it has ever been. We are proud of what we have achieved, and of course, the work continues.

- We achieved Disability Confident Committed Level 1 status and a Race Equality Matters Bronze Trailblazer award.
- We celebrated Windrush 75 with drop-in sessions run by an external facilitator and launched a podcast to provide a legacy for this work.
- We had a strong RBL presence at several Pride events during the summer, including London Pride for the first time.
- We showed our continuing support for our Armed Forces family and our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award by introducing a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for former members of the Armed Forces, their families and reservists.
- We celebrated National Inclusion Week with a talk from Emma Sheardown, former Paralympian dressage medallist and motivational

speaker, who talked about the barriers disabled people face in customer services.

- We surveyed RBL branches (with Network Engagement) to find out more about the diverse communities they were already engaging with, and the tools and resources they need to engage with more.
- We undertook a detailed analysis of our staff engagement survey's key D&I themes to discover more about engagement levels of different and diverse groups of colleagues at the RBL.

### Learning and development

Our newly developed Learning and Development (L&D) function has enabled us to make real progress in this area over the past 12 months.

Staff training for colleagues right across the RBL has been significantly enhanced to ensure we take a proactive approach to development for staff. For example, 556 colleagues have attended 48 courses during 2023, 52 colleagues are currently undertaking apprenticeship qualifications, 41 colleagues were approved to undertake external professional qualifications and 20 colleagues are having professional coaching.

Staff involved in our Improving Beneficiary Journeys programme have been supported with timely and appropriate training, including approximately 220 colleagues each attending a four-day training programme between June and October 2023.

Membership training has now moved under the central L&D team, which has enabled us to focus on Branch Community Support and their learning needs. By September 2023, 160 members had been trained or were signed up for training. The L&D team has also reviewed all training packages, developed a new learning strategy and policy, completed a training-needs analysis and developed a membership learning plan for 2024.

We have introduced a new platform, a Learning Management System, to better inform staff of the training and personal-development opportunities that are available and accessible to them. The new system is being used to offer face-to-face courses as well as e-learning modules for staff, members and volunteers. Since we introduced the platform, 297 e-learning courses have been completed for both personal and professional development, and 1,239 e-learning courses have been

completed as part of induction or refresher training.

We have started to digitalise much of our learning content to allow easy access to colleagues working remotely or hybrid, thereby cutting costs and increasing uptake. This means we are developing our own e-learning courses, with eight having been created this year.

### Resourcing

This year has also seen improvement in our resourcing function. Capability and capacity were increased so the candidate experience was better. Our time to recruit dropped and our success rate in filling vacancies increased.

For the first time, we ran recruitment open days in two care homes, and we were able to make job offers to nine of the 24 candidates who attended, which proved that it was a successful initiative. We plan to run two recruitment open days in each care home in 2024.

To build on our recruitment successes, we have sourced a new Applicant Tracking System that will provide the step change needed to meet our resourcing requirement now and in the future, for both staff and volunteers. This will help us to be more efficient and reduce costs, and will be implemented in 2024.

### Volunteers

Early in 2023, we delivered a joint People Survey of staff and volunteers. All volunteers across the RBL, Poppyscotland and the National Memorial Arboretum were given the opportunity to contribute, and the results show that they have a positive experience when supporting us:

- 85% would recommend the RBL as a good place to volunteer
- 85% feel their contribution is valued
- 95% feel proud to volunteer for the RBL
- 93% feel volunteering with the RBL gives them a sense of personal achievement

The results also showed that there were two areas we can focus on improving in 2024:

- 69% feel RBL shares information effectively
- 63% understand where the organisation is headed

To address this, we launched an improved Volunteer Newsletter, reaching more people than ever, and more than 400 volunteers are now regularly engaging with our communications. The Volunteer Voice Group has been expanded, with more representation from all our key volunteer



Volunteer at a Poppy Walk

roles, to give them an opportunity to offer their perspective and get more involved in strategic projects.

We have also launched a new Volunteer Induction. Delivered by local managers, it will ensure volunteers joining the RBL receive a consistent experience and gain a better understanding of the charity's vision and strategy.

We launched new recruitment pages on the RBL website to deliver a consistent and professional experience for those applying for volunteer roles. Delivered in time for our 2023 Poppy Appeal, this new process allows the public to find specific vacancies in their local area and apply directly.

We also launched a new recruitment portal to enable RBL employees to volunteer during the Poppy Appeal and Remembrance. The portal allows staff to volunteer for multiple roles, increasing the impact of their contribution.

### **Pay review – cost-of-living payments**

April 2020 saw the launch of our new pay framework, designed to ensure salaries are benchmarked against the charity/job sector and to provide transparency to staff on their pay and future progression. Significant investment was made in this scheme, resulting in a strong offering for both current and new staff.

Care homes were a particular concern, with high turnover rates, alongside high social-care vacancies more broadly. The need to remain competitive in the care labour market meant that we took a targeted approach to pay that would allow us to secure and retain capable and committed staff.

Alongside the pay review, we were also very mindful of the cost-of-living crisis that has hit so many of our staff. The RBL was keen to support as many employees as possible, with a one-off payment for those in lower-paid roles in the winter of 2022.

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**“Our Volunteer Induction will ensure volunteers receive a consistent experience and gain a better understanding of the charity’s vision”**

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# Fundraising



Poppy Appeal  
Collector at  
Birmingham City  
Poppy Day on  
8th November, 2022

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**“We receive  
incredible support  
from the great British  
public. Our volunteers,  
fundraisers and  
supporters are at the  
heart of our work”**

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**At the Royal British Legion,** we receive incredible support from the great British public, with hundreds of thousands of people giving millions of pounds to help support the Armed Forces family. Our volunteers, fundraisers and supporters are at the heart of our work. Over the past year, we have begun to implement our new strategy to drive long-term, sustainable fundraising, with a great supporter experience in everything that we do.

### **The Three Giants**

Our strategy, the ‘Three Giants’, runs throughout our fundraising activity, straddling the Poppy Appeal, Individual Giving and Legacies. This year, we have made great progress in identifying the right resources for the right places and have worked through this period of change to deliver business as usual.

Work has started on developing an enhanced culture of collaboration and top performance, as well as addressing ways of working to support efficiency across our fundraising. Evolving and embedding this new culture will be a key deliverable for 2024.

While the ‘Three Giants’ strategy identifies the Poppy Appeal, Individual Giving and Legacies as the biggest opportunity for significant long-term growth, it’s important to recognise that every gift or income fundraised from a supporter is essential and needs to be valued and appreciated as such.

To support this, we have been working on our processes, looking to make sure that every fundraising query is answered properly and that every donation is processed, with heartfelt thanks given, as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **The heart of the Poppy Appeal**

The November 2022 Poppy Appeal raised £39.3 million in public donations and £3.2 million from the sale of wreaths, broadly in line with the previous year’s total of £42.2 million. This was achieved through a combination of our extraordinary volunteer collectors, members, supporters and staff. At its core, the Poppy Appeal has always been a volunteer-led campaign centred around Remembrance, and it was great to see many volunteers return to collecting, following the pandemic limitations of recent years.

Importantly, £19 million of that total was raised by more than 1,000 volunteer Poppy Appeal Organisers who are also Royal British Legion members, with many

affiliated to local branches. This membership support accounts for 43% of our vital volunteer Poppy Appeal Organisers across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and in overseas branches as well. This demonstrates the ongoing commitment and time members put towards the Poppy Appeal each year, for which we are extremely grateful.

Production of the new plastic-free poppy was also ramped up at our Aylesford site this year, ready for its planned introduction at the 2023 Poppy Appeal. The announcement of our new plastic-free poppy design in the spring was very well received in the media and by our supporters. Find out more on page 24.

### **More than £1 million in a single day’s collection**

Our 2022 London Poppy Day smashed through the £1 million-in-a-day target this year, raising £1.137 million. It saw hundreds of Armed Forces personnel in uniform, veterans and volunteers once again collecting for us across transport hubs and promoting the cause of the Royal British Legion. We sincerely thank Network Rail, Transport for London and the many companies, volunteers and, of course, Armed Forces personnel for their continued support of our biggest fundraising day of the Poppy Appeal.

Following the 2022 Poppy Appeal, we took a fresh approach to our other City Poppy Day collections, and we will be trialling a pilot in Manchester in 2023 to provide a more engaging opportunity for the charity to raise awareness of our support work and the funds needed.

Plans were also developed this year to test the promotion of Gifts in Wills during the Poppy Appeal period. Staff and volunteer teams across the North-west of England and Northern Ireland have been provided with training and materials to encourage conversations with the public. These very significant bequests are an essential part of our current and future fundraising for the charity, and we will carefully monitor how these promotions occur during the Poppy Appeal period.

### **Cashless donations**

More than £6.2 million was raised via our 5,000 contactless terminals in the 2022 Poppy Appeal, up from £3.8 million in 2021. This further signalled a change in the use of cash. We have taken the learning from this growing donation route and will be using more terminals and testing more cashless enhancements in 2023, including



The Pedal to Paris  
fundraising event



Maya Renard and  
D-Day veteran  
Bernard Morgan at  
the launch of the  
annual Poppy Appeal





the use of local QR codes and unattended devices with corporate partners. Public cash donations still account for the significant majority of the Poppy Appeal, so we need to continue to encourage those, while also investing in and evolving the cashless donations routes to match a changing society.

### Support from across society

Alongside the amazing support of the Poppy Appeal, the British public have shown wonderful generosity to the RBL throughout the year. Here, we raised £39.3 million. This was below our £50 million target, but within this were some great successes. More than 100,000 new supporters kindly engaged with us, donating, running, sponsoring and purchasing to support our vital work.

In this year, we recruited 35,000 new regular givers to support us for the future, with a lower cost per supporter than in previous years. We now have more than 61,000 supporters interested in leaving, or having already left, a Gift in their Will to the RBL. This incredible generosity is enormously appreciated and will make a significant difference to our work to support the Armed Forces community for the long term.

However, income from Gifts in Wills was significantly down, with a smaller average per estate and a notable delay in some estates owing to delays in the probate service. The overall impact of this was income of £23.3 million, £1.1 million down on budget and £7 million down on the previous exceptional year.

Our fundraising events saw more than 4,600 people run, cycle or walk to raise money for our Armed Forces community. This was a great number, with particularly good support for some key events, such as Pedal to Paris and the London Marathon. However, other events did less well, and the overall impact was income of £1.6 million, £1.1 million lower than expected. In the next year, we are reviewing our events portfolio and implementing evolved ways of working that should lead us back to a better position.

In corporate partnerships and our trading activities, we were broadly on track. We saw the end of some significant partnerships, such as our multi-year relationship with Coventry Building Society, as well as great ongoing relationships with key partners, including the Premier League, Pets at Home, The Westminster Collection and Golden Charter. Our Poppy

## “More than 100,000 new supporters kindly engaged with us, donating, running, sponsoring and purchasing to support our vital work”

Shop was successful, with web sales of more than £4.6 million. We intend to keep working to offer these supporters greater options to engage with the RBL and ensure we have the right products to make the most of this area.

### Progress against aims set out in the 2022 report

We said we would complete the implementation of the new ‘Three Giants’ fundraising strategy and team structure to provide a longer-term view of sustainable income to meet the needs of the RBL.

Within the Poppy Appeal this year, we have established a new strategy and leadership to support the overarching ‘Three Giants’ fundraising strategy. We have also embedded a dedicated Poppy Appeal Directorate and Team structure, while refining our longer-term plans to fix, protect and strengthen the Poppy Appeal for the future.

We said we would improve our ability to contact more of our new supporters by establishing clearer communication permissions, to help grow our number of overall fundraising supporters to more than 607,000.

We have done this by developing new techniques to ask individual supporters of the 2023 Poppy Appeal to give their permission for further communication. This will also include development across our cashless technology to test engagement and help grow our regular supporter numbers.

We said we would raise £50 million in the 2022 Poppy Appeal and £50 million from the broader fundraising activity across the year.

We raised £42.5 million in the 2022 Poppy Appeal, including wreath sales, falling short of our £50 million aim. To improve this, we

need to boost staff and volunteer vacancies going into the next appeal. We also failed to raise more than £1 million of all-year-round income that was planned outside of the Poppy Appeal, but can improve this with a more targeted plan of events throughout the year.

Within the Poppy Appeal, we have established a pilot programme to promote Gifts in Wills in two key regions, before learning from that experience at the next appeal and rolling out a refined programme across all regions. We have also established a new Poppy Appeal Organiser Insight Panel to encourage and improve our fundraising engagement opportunities, as well as piloting a new Poppy Appeal volunteering opportunity in some areas with no central role.

We said we would promote the value of our Gift in Wills and Legacy donations across the RBL and establish more fundraising volunteering engagement opportunities, to include Business Ambassadors.

Within the year, we have looked at our Business Ambassadors work and decided that a different approach would most support income growth from corporate partnerships. While this is still an opportunity, we have first focused on our new-business pipeline and the opportunity of restricted funding for some of our welfare work. This new approach is still being developed but, at the end of the year, it is bearing fruit, with our corporate new-business opportunities looking significant. Over the course of the next year, we hope to be able to turn a number of these opportunities into additional income to support the Armed Forces community.

### Responsible fundraising

We want to ensure that all fundraising activities for the Royal British Legion are carried out to high standards and



in full compliance with all regulations. Our approach to fundraising is driven by three key principles:

- **Accountability** Our own and third-party fundraisers are required to ensure that their fundraising is delivered to the Fundraising Regulator's standards. We will only work with third parties who share this commitment.
- **Fairness** We set out to treat all members of the public fairly. We try to explain clearly how donations can be made, how regular donations can be stopped and what is involved in signing up to a fundraising challenge.
- **Respect** We want to thank and appreciate supporters for any support they can give us. We respect our supporters' privacy and look to make it easy to change preferences or opt out of communications.

The RBL is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising. We always aim to comply with the Fundraising Code of Practice, and we make appropriate use of the Fundraising Regulator logo on our fundraising materials. Our Fundraising Promise is published on our website, and we continue to utilise our 'Fundraising Compliance' e-learning module as part of our inductions for new fundraising staff. We fundraise in accordance with all relevant schemes and standards, and within the last year have not reported any breaches of the Fundraising Code of Conduct. We work to comply with UK data-protection legislation.

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## “Generous donations from companies, trusts and individuals enabled us to continue providing support for the Armed Forces community”

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Our approach to complaints is that they are an opportunity to better understand our supporters, with any expression of dissatisfaction by a supporter recorded as a complaint and featured in our annual complaints returns to the Fundraising Regulator and Gambling Commission. In 2023, the number of complaints relating to fundraising activity was 811. This number has increased from 2022, in which 670 were recorded. The main area of complaints was for Addressed Direct Mail (312), and we are reviewing our contact strategy to ensure we are talking to the right people at the right time. We also had some issues related to fulfilment of items to supporters, our Poppy Supporter Pins, thank-you letters and our little Remembrance crosses. We are working to make sure we can provide what supporters need in a reasonable timeframe, particularly during our busiest period around the Poppy Appeal. Our complaint ratios for our fundraising areas also remain

consistent with what other charities of our size see across the charity sector.

We recognise that we have an obligation to protect those who may be in vulnerable circumstances. We do this in a way that strikes a balance – setting out to protect potential donors while also being respectful of any desire they express to support us. The RBL is committed to protecting children and vulnerable adults from being harmed by gambling. Therefore, our 'Supporters in a Vulnerable Circumstance' policy is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation/best practice, and we continued to advertise Gambling Support resources on all our Lottery and Raffle marketing materials.

Some of our fundraising activity is carried out by our own staff, some by volunteers, and a small proportion is delivered by professional fundraising agencies. All commercial third-party fundraisers are contractually obligated to be registered with the Fundraising Regulator. The RBL conducts its own Mystery Shopping exercises for all face-to-face agencies that partner with us. The RBL listens to a proportion of all the fundraising calls made on our behalf by third-party fundraising agencies. We work in partnership with the professional fundraising agencies that we employ. We visit their premises regularly to provide training on our standards as well as 'train the trainer' to ensure our standards can be made clear to new fundraisers and refreshed with existing fundraisers who are representing us.



Above: A participant in one of the 2022 Poppy Run fundraising events



### Thank you to our major supporters

The generous donations we have received over the past year from companies, trusts and individuals have enabled us to continue providing life-changing support for the Armed Forces community. The funds raised also help us campaign for that community and make sure the whole nation remembers their unique contribution.

In particular, we would like to thank the following organisations and individuals, who have contributed £20,000 or more in financial or in-kind support during 2023:

**288 Group Ltd (The Westminster Collection)**  
**AmazonSmile**  
**Mrs G M Bramall**  
**Britvic PLC**  
**Cash4Coins**  
**Centrica**  
**Chapel Down Group PLC**  
**Coventry Building Society**  
**Dartmouth Brands**  
**Garfield Weston Foundation**  
**Girlguiding**  
**Golden Charter Ltd**  
**Greenwich Hospital**  
**Greggs PLC**  
**Howmet Aerospace**  
**Insignia 16 Ltd (Poppies4Kits)**  
**J D Wetherspoon**  
**Marks & Spencer**  
**Morrisons**  
**PayPal Giving UK**  
**Pets at Home**  
**The Premier League and its member clubs**  
**Revolut**  
**Sainsbury's PLC**  
**Sky**  
**Sir Howard and Lady Stringer**  
**Tesco**  
**Transport for London**  
**Dorothy Mary Twiggins Charitable Trust**  
**The Michael Uren Foundation**  
**Viking Cruises**

Every year, our branches and clubs undertake their own fundraising in support of the Royal British Legion. We continue to be hugely grateful for their generosity, passion and commitment. **Thank you.**

## Aims for 2024

### Services and support

- Embed our new ways of working to make things easier for people reaching out for support with our Improving Beneficiary Journeys programme.
- Carry out a home-by-home efficiency review in our care homes, looking to drive value for money and effectiveness.
- Launch and run the Invictus Team UK recovery programme in readiness for the Invictus Games in Canada in 2025.
- We expect the reduction in available funds will impact the breadth and scale of our services. We will monitor beneficiary needs data and minimise any impact reduced resources may have.

### Remembrance

- Define a research strategy that allows us to evaluate the impact of our work and progress at ensuring the service and sacrifice of our Armed Forces family is always remembered.
- Deliver an RBL-wide programme to ensure that the service and sacrifice of the D-Day generation is always remembered, by connecting people to those in their family or community who played their part 80 years ago, creating relevance and reasons for people to actively remember.
- Build relationships with those who served in more recent conflicts in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, to ensure that we mark these significant anniversaries in ways that resonate with them and their families.

### Campaigns, policy and research

- Ensure that insights from the needs analysis of the Armed Forces community help us to advocate for the changes the community most needs us to deliver.
- Communicate to political parties and candidates the changes we think would have the most positive impact for the Armed Forces community during the general election.
- Provide ongoing evidence about the impact of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty and press for expansion in its scope.
- Build a strong response to the Etherton report that demonstrates our commitment to the LGBTQ+ community.

### Membership

- Set out our technical requirements for the Future of Membership (FoM), based on a phased delivery. Attract the next generation of RBL members, offering individual membership and a new digital experience.
- Keep improving branch compliance, with the support of the Membership Council, county officers and branch officers, embedding best practice and better ways of working into our membership formations.

### Staff and volunteers

- Progress our work on the evolution of our culture and build stronger relationships across teams and communities.
- Establish a clear pathway for the replacement of our HRIS system in 2026 and prepare our systems and processes accordingly.

### Fundraising

- Drive the development of an excellent fundraising culture, focusing on continuous improvement, excellent performance management and insight.
- Create the right infrastructure to support sustainable fundraising growth, with a focus on the case for support and supporter journeys.
- Create a great supporter experience across fundraising, asking the right people for the right thing at the right time.
- Establish a transformational programme of change to help fix, protect and strengthen the Poppy Appeal in the longer term.

# National President and Trustees



**Vice Admiral  
Sir Clive Johnstone  
(Retd) KBE CB  
National President**

Clive assumed his role as National President of the Royal British Legion in May 2023. He retired as a Vice Admiral in 2019 and his last role was as the Commander of NATO's Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM). During his career, Clive has deployed to most points on the compass and has served on ships ranging from minesweepers to aircraft carriers.



**Jason Coward  
National Chair**

Jason was elected National Chair in May 2022, but has been on the RBL Board of Trustees since May 2014. He has a commercial background in marketing and communications. His RBL experience includes three years as Chair of the Membership Council, as well as serving as Chair of Poppyscotland and on the Governance & Nominations Committee.



**Lynda Atkins DL  
National Vice Chair**

Lynda was elected National Vice Chair in May 2022, having previously served as a Trustee between May 2019 and March 2022. She served in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers TA. She served as an independent County Councillor before being appointed Deputy Lieutenant in 2019. Lynda chairs the Membership Council.



**Paul Astruc FCCA MBA**

Paul was appointed to the Board of Trustees in May 2023. Paul qualified as an accountant with Shell International and has more than 30 years' experience in banking and commerce, including nine years as a Finance Executive at Lloyds Banking Group and, more recently, as CFO of Nottingham Building Society, where he remains on the Board. Paul chairs the Finance Committee and its Investments Sub-committee.



**John Boisson**

John was elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2022 after serving on the Membership Council. As a civil servant, he currently commands RAF Holbeach and RAF Donna Nook, both Air Weapons Ranges on the Lincolnshire coast. John is also serving in the Army and has completed 37 years' service in the Guards Division – 34 years full time and three years as a reservist. During the year ended 30th September, 2023, John served as Chair of the Membership Council.



**Steven Lee**

Steven was elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2023. He is a former Royal Marine. During his career, Steven served in 42 Commando, 43 Commando, RMR City of London, the Royal Navy headquarters, the Ministry of Defence, and with the United Nations, NATO and the US Marine Corps. Steven is a member of the Finance Committee and the Branch Property Trusts Trustee Committee.



**Jan Buxton**

Jan joined the Board of Trustees in January 2024 in her capacity as Chair of the Women's Section. Jan joined the RBL Women's Section in 1994 and has served as a Branch and County Treasurer and County Committee member, as well as National Vice Chair of the Women's Section for the past three years. Before her retirement, Jan worked for 26 years in the NHS. Jan is a member of the Care Services Committee.



**Phil Davies**

Phil was elected to the Board in May 2023 after serving on the Membership Council. He joined the Royal Navy as an Electrical Mechanic before transferring to the aircrew branch to become a Search and Rescue Diver. After leaving the Navy, he ran his own business and is now Managing Director of a local business. Phil is a member of the Finance Committee, its Investments Sub-committee and the Branch Property Trusts Trustee Committee.



**Paul Harris QGM**

Paul was co-opted as a Trustee in February 2018, elected in May 2019 and re-elected in May 2022. He served in the Army for 32 years, retiring as Lieutenant Colonel in 2006. He was a Director of an international company, then owned a management consultancy, from which he has retired. He is a member of the Audit & Risk Committee and Governance & Nominations Committee, a Trustee of Poppyscotland, and chairs the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland and the Irish Ex-Service Trust.



**James Lambert**

James was elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2023. He was previously Vice-Chair of the National Branches District Committee. James is Head of Economics and Regulation at London Gatwick Airport. He served in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and is a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and of the Society of Professional Economists. James is a member of the Audit & Risk Committee and the Care Services Committee.



**Elizabeth Butler FCA**

Liz was appointed to the Board in May 2018. In addition to being a chartered accountant, Liz has a portfolio of non-executive roles, including Board member and Chair of the Audit & Risk Committees of the Regulator of Social Housing and Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board. Liz chairs the Audit & Risk Committee and is a member of the Finance Committee.

**Helen Owen**

Helen was elected to the Board in May 2020, and re-elected for a second term in May 2023. She is the Director of Transformation at the charity GambleAware and has held non-executive roles, including Governor at the University of Westminster. Helen is Chair of the Board of Trustees of Poppyscotland.

**Anny Reid OBE**

Anny was elected as a Trustee in May 2016. She served in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service for 30 years, the last four as Chair of its trust. Anny chairs the Conference Committee, is Chair of the Board of Trustees for the National Memorial Arboretum and is a member of the Care Services Committee.

**Monica Risam**

Monica was appointed to the Board in October 2020. She is a dual-qualified US and UK lawyer and is the Group General Counsel of the Lombard International Group. Monica is also a non-executive member of The Elton John AIDS Foundation's Finance and Investment Committee. Monica is a member of the Governance & Nominations Committee.

**Debbie Sorkin**

Debbie was appointed to the Board in June 2018. She is National Director of Systems Leadership at the Leadership Centre, a charity working to strengthen leadership across public services. Debbie has experience of working in the NHS and in social care. Debbie leads for the Board on care and safeguarding, chairs the Care Services Committee and is a member of the Audit & Risk Committee.

**Patsy Wilkinson CB**

Patsy was appointed to the Board in December 2021, following a senior government career in national security. She is also a Non-Executive Director and adviser, and an Honorary Fellow at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge. Patsy chairs the Governance & Nominations Committee, is Vice Chair of the Membership Council and a Trustee of the National Memorial Arboretum.

**Lieutenant General (Retd)  
James Bashall CB CBE**

James retired from the Regular Army in 2018, following 34 years' service, including tours in Germany, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and South Armagh. He later held the posts of Chief of Staff at Permanent Joint Headquarters, Director of Personnel at Army Headquarters and Commander Home Command. His term as National President ended in May 2023.

**Rodney Bedford**

Rod served for 19 years in the Grenadier Guards and then for 18 years in the Kent Police. Rod was previously elected to the Membership Council, on which he served two terms of three years. He was elected to the Board of Trustees in May 2017 and his term of office ended in May 2023.

**Tony Goodwin BEM**

Tony was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2020. He served in the Royal Air Force for almost 40 years. Tony was previously elected to and served for three years on the Membership Council. Tony stepped down from the Board in February 2023.

**Garry Mills**

Garry was elected to the Board in April 2022. He served in the Ulster Defence Regiment, the Corps of Royal Military Police and the Royal Ulster Constabulary GC. Following a career in management consultancy, Garry moved to the third sector, specialising in welfare rights, benefits and money advice. Garry's term of office ended in May 2023.

**Philip Moore TD**

Philip was appointed as a Trustee in 2014 and re-appointed in 2017 and 2020. He was a Finance Director for nearly 20 years, as well as a Non-Executive Director at Bank of Ireland (UK) plc, Wesleyan Assurance Society, Skipton Building Society and Connells Ltd, and a Governor of North Hertfordshire College. Philip's term of office ended in May 2023.

**Heather Spence**

Heather served in the Royal Army Medical Corps TA for 11 years. She joined the RBL Women's Section at the age of 17. Heather was the Eastern Regional Standard Bearer for 20 years and won Deputy National Standard Bearer ten times. Heather served on the Board of Trustees as Chair of the Women's Section until January 2024.

# Board of Trustees

## Co-opted Members

The Trustees would like to recognise the support given by the following co-opted members, who bring their special expertise to the boards and committees on which they sit:

Vanessa Donegan  
Antony Macaulay  
Jenny Rowe  
Dr Jonathan Wittmann  
Naim Moukarzel

## National President

Sir Clive Johnstone KBE CB  
(from May 2023)  
Lieutenant General James Bashall  
CB CBE (until May 2023)

## National Chair

Jason Coward

## National Vice Chair

Lynda Atkins

## Key Committees of the Board of Trustees and Current Membership

### Audit & Risk Committee

Elizabeth Butler (Chair)  
Paul Harris  
James Lambert  
Debbie Sorkin

### Finance Committee

Paul Astruc (Chair) (from May 2023)  
Philip Moore (Chair) (until May 2023)  
Elizabeth Butler  
Phil Davies

Steven Lee

Vanessa Donegan  
Dr Jonathan Wittmann

### Investments Sub-Committee (formed January 2024)

Paul Astruc (Chair)  
Phil Davies  
Vanessa Donegan  
Dr Jonathan Wittmann

### Governance & Nominations Committee

Patsy Wilkinson (Chair) (from January 2024)  
Jason Coward (Chair) (until December 2023)  
Paul Harris  
Monica Risam

### Conference Committee

Anny Reid (Chair)  
John Gilmore  
Andrew Huggins  
Grant Parrott  
Kenneth Terry

## Branch Property Trusts Trustee Committee

Jenny Rowe (Chair)  
Phil Davies  
Steven Lee  
Antony Macaulay

## Care Services Committee

Debbie Sorkin (Chair)  
Jan Buxton  
James Lambert  
Anny Reid

## Membership Council

Lynda Atkins (Chair) (from January 2024)  
John Boisson (Chair) (until January 2024)  
Patsy Wilkinson (Vice Chair)  
Hugh Ashton-Moore  
Gordon Barker  
Albert Bell  
Michael Challinor  
Bob Chambers  
Emma Cox  
Dilys Hooper  
Bob Howard  
Steve Lewis  
Gerry Nunn  
Marc Reynolds  
Kelly Slark  
Kenneth Terry  
Philip Walden  
Adrian Wright

**Executive Board****Director General**

Mark Atkinson (from January 2024)  
Charles Byrne (until November 2023)

**Chief Financial Officer**

Christopher Tingle (from December 2023)

**Chief Operating Officer**

Daniel Oppenheimer (until October 2023)

**Executive Director:****Corporate Services**

Zein Virani (from December 2023)

**Executive Director: Services**

Antony Baines

**Executive Director: Marketing,  
Fundraising and Remembrance**

Gary Ryan

**Executive Director: People and  
Organisational Development**

Karen Gill

**Executive Director: Membership**

Janet Talman

**Consultants and Advisors****Bankers**

Lloyds Bank  
Charities  
4th Floor  
25 Gresham Street  
London  
EC2V 7HN

**Independent Auditors**

Deloitte LLP  
1 New Street Square  
London  
EC4A 3HQ

**Investment Managers**

Cazenove Capital Management Limited  
12 Moorgate  
London  
EC2R 6DA

**Legal Advisors**

Withers  
20 Old Bailey  
London  
EC4M 7AN

**Women's Section****Chair**

Jan Buxton (from January 2024)  
Heather Spence (until January 2024)

**Vice Chair**

Laura Hayworth (from January 2024)  
Jan Buxton (until January 2024)

**Chair of Finance**

Sandra Fishlock

**Central Committee**

Diane Boisson  
Pat Holden  
Roz Kane  
Sandra Saban  
Kay Scase  
Heather Spence  
Alyson Wilson

**Life Vice Presidents**

Dame Mary Bridges DBE  
Doris Ingham OBE  
Maureen Lodder OBE  
Patricia Valler OBE  
Wendy Bromwich JP  
Marilyn Humphry  
Pat Chrimes OBE

**Vice Presidents and Patronesses**

Joanne Andrew-Steer MBE  
Auriol, Marchioness of Linlithgow  
The Right Honourable the  
Countess Bathurst  
The Lady Grey of Codnor  
Diana Hill  
Sara Jones CBE OStJ DL JP  
Janie Martin DL

**Charity Registration number:** 219279

**Principal Office:**

The Royal British Legion  
Haig House  
199 Borough High Street  
London  
SE1 1AA



# Financial review

**In 2023, our total income reduced by £6.4 million (4%) to £147.1 million (2022: £153.5 million) as donations were impacted by the weak economic outlook and high inflation.**

At £180.6 million, total expenditure increased by £28.7 million (19%) as we used some of our surplus reserves to expand our welfare services.

We spent an additional £10 million on grants to individuals, following the launch of the Cost of Living Grants programme to help those in our community struggling to cope with the rising cost of food and fuel. Through this programme, we provided grants of £5.1 million to 7,000 households and reached many new beneficiaries who had not contacted us before. This led to an increase in other types of grant expenditure as our caseworkers worked with these individuals to identify and address broader areas of need. We also invested in our Admiral Nurse Service, Caseworking and Specialist teams, and doubled our expenditure on Recovery, taking the lead role in supporting Invictus Team UK for the first time. Overall, our charitable expenditure increased by £24.6 million (22%) to £133.7 million (2022: £109.1 million), and we spent 74p in every pound on our charitable activities (2022: 72p in every pound), with the remainder spent on raising the funds needed to deliver the RBL's mission.

The cost of delivering quality care in our care homes increased by 18% to £42.7 million (2022: £36.3 million), primarily driven by increases in staffing costs as we sought to attract and retain high-quality care staff in an increasingly competitive environment. Inflationary pressures also played a part, reflected in the increased cost of food, energy and consumables. The additional cost of running our homes was partly offset by a £4.4 million increase in fee income, resulting from increases in both fee rates and occupancy levels. Before allocated support costs of £8.4 million, our six care homes required a subsidy from our free reserves of £12.8 million (2022: £11.4 million subsidy). In view of the rising cost of care and the wider challenges facing the care sector, we have launched an internal

review to identify options for reducing the care homes deficit in the future.

2023 was a challenging year for fundraising across the charity sector, and the Royal British Legion was no exception. The November 2022 Poppy Appeal raised £39.3 million in public donations and £3.2 million from the sale of wreaths (included within Income from Commercial Activities), a small increase on the previous year's total of £42.2 million. However, income from other sources of fundraising declined as the cost-of-living crisis impacted charitable giving. Total fundraising income (including donations and legacies, income from fundraising events, lotteries and trading) fell by 9% to £108.2 million (2022: £118.7 million). At the same time, the cost of generating funds increased, driven by high inflation. The overall return from our fundraising activities (before allocated support costs) reduced by £15.6 million to £66.0 million (2022: £81.6 million). As set out in the fundraising section of this report, we are addressing this through our 'Three Giants' fundraising strategy, focusing our efforts on those areas with the highest return and growth potential, streamlining how we work to improve the experience of our supporters and promoting collaboration across the different areas of fundraising in order to maximise income.

Overall, the RBL generated a deficit before gains and losses of £33.6 million (2022: £1.7 million surplus). After net gains on our financial and property investments of £6.6 million (2022: £5.4 million loss) and a £0.6 million reduction in the value of our pension funds (2022: £2.0 million increase), group funds reduced by £27.6 million (2022: £1.7 million reduction).

The value of restricted funds reduced by £4.0 million to £164.9 million (2022: £169.0 million) and the value of unrestricted funds reduced by £23.5 million to £185.6 million (2022: 209.1 million). During the year, we continued our work to reduce the restrictions on disposal proceeds arising from the sale of properties held in Branch Property Trusts, moving £3.1 million (2022: £3.3 million) from restricted Branch

Property Trust funds into less restricted and designated Area Trust Funds. Area Trust Funds are now being used as an important source of funding for welfare services in the area where the branch property was originally located. These services include our Admiral Nurses, who support those caring for loved ones with dementia; casework; advice; and grants.

As well as ensuring that we make the best use of our available reserves, we are rebalancing our budgets and reducing our expenditure, to ensure that our finances are sustainable for the long term. This will become increasingly important as we spend our remaining surplus reserves, which stood at £28.5 million at 30th September, 2023 (2022: £49 million).

## Financial investments

At the year end, the total value of the group's investment portfolio was £172.9 million (2022: £172.3 million). The portfolio is managed through three main investment managers: Cazenove Capital manages the charity's main investment portfolio (£151.9 million), Sarasin & Partners manages Poppyscotland's investments (£3.3 million) and Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) manages branch-related investments (£7.0 million), including those held in legacy and property trusts. The remaining investments are held overseas. Although 2023 was a volatile year in the investment markets, the RBL's financial investment portfolio ended the year at a similar level to 2022.

The mandates agreed with all three investment managers specify the level of risk that can be undertaken by defining asset classes and ranges, benchmarks and acceptable volatility. All investments must comply with the RBL's Responsible Investment Policy, which aligns the charity's investment strategy with its aims, which are to safeguard the welfare, interests and memory of those who are serving or who have served in the Armed Forces.

The RBL restricts investment in areas that may directly conflict with its aims, including alcohol, gambling, tobacco and high-interest-rate lending. Accordingly, it

will not invest directly in companies that generate more than 10% of revenues from these areas. As it is more difficult to apply these restrictions to pooled funds, indirect exposure to these areas is closely monitored and a review triggered if this exceeds 1% of the total investment portfolio or 10% of an individual fund holding.

The RBL recognises that companies do not operate in a vacuum, and that non-financial issues such as human rights and corruption can have very real financial implications over the medium to long term. As such, the investment strategy integrates environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, meaning that each investment's impact on the environment and society is considered as part of the investment decision. The RBL expects its investment managers to be active owners of its capital and engage with the companies and managers in which it invests to improve its ESG attributes.

The RBL also recognises that it needs to respond to the key challenge of climate change and that limiting global temperature rises will require significant changes in business, investment, technology development and fossil-fuel use. The RBL monitors the carbon emissions of its equity investment portfolio and seeks to reduce these emissions over time through investment selection and through the engagement of its appointed investment managers with companies in order to drive positive change.

The RBL's main investment manager, Cazenove Capital, has been practising sustainable investing since 2002. As part of the Schroders Group, it has been awarded the highest possible rating of A+ by the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) for its approach to responsible investment. It is a special adviser to the Carbon Disclosure Project; a founding member of the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change; a member of the UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association; and a member of the European Sustainable Investment Forum. It has also been included in ShareAction's top 10 Global Asset Managers for Responsible Investment; and

is ranked in the top five of the AODP Global Climate Index for Asset Managers. Cazenove Capital's objective is that all discretionary assets under management will be net zero-aligned by 2050.

## Main investment portfolio

The main investment portfolio is managed by Cazenove Capital. The mandate agreed with Cazenove Capital is to achieve a rate of return in excess of CPI+3% over the medium term. The portfolio delivered returns of 3% for the year ended 30th September, 2023, falling short of its target. The current period of high inflation is impacting the benchmark, and the Trustees expect the portfolio to achieve its target over the medium term once inflation has been brought back under control. The value of the portfolio increased to £151.9 million (2022: £147.5 million) over the year and generated £3.1 million (2022: £2.7 million) of investment income.

## Poppyscotland portfolio

The Poppyscotland portfolio is managed by Sarasin & Partners. During the year to 30th September, 2023, the Poppyscotland portfolio reduced its value from £6.3 million to £3.3 million and generated £0.2 million (2022: £0.3 million) of investment income. The Poppyscotland portfolio is being drawn down to finance Poppyscotland's deficits over the medium term, as part of an agreed strategy for Poppyscotland to spend the funds previously used as reserves. After this point, the RBL will provide financial support to enable Poppyscotland to continue to operate as a going concern and meet its liabilities as they fall due. In this context, the mandate agreed with the investment manager is to preserve capital values and achieve a return in line with inflation.

## Branch investments

Branch and county investments of £7.0 million (2022: £6.9 million) are primarily managed by CCLA and held in a mix of listed investments and unit trusts.

## Pension

The group pension deficit in these accounts now relates solely to the Earl Haig Fund (Poppyscotland). The deficit on the Poppyscotland pension fund increased from £1.1 million to £1.4 million, primarily due to a reduction in the value of the pension-fund assets, which are held in an investment portfolio. We do not expect the deficit to materially affect the group's ability to meet its charitable objectives in the future.

The RBL pension fund was in surplus by £4.4 million (2022: £4.4 million) as at 30th September, 2023. Under the pension-scheme rules, the employers are unable to utilise this surplus, as once contributions are paid into the scheme, they cannot be withdrawn. Accordingly, the surplus on the RBL scheme is not recognised in these accounts.

## Funds

The RBL's total funds of £350.5 million (2022: £378.1 million) represent the value of all the assets used by the charity to deliver its charitable objectives, including its properties. The charity's funds are explained in more detail on page 8. They include £164.9 million (2022: £169.0 million) of restricted reserves, which comprise property and other assets given to the RBL for a specific purpose and unavailable for general use.

Within unrestricted funds of £185.6 million (2022: £209.1 million) are designated funds representing the value of the RBL's functional fixed assets (£58.3 million, 2022: £58.0 million); funds held by RBL branches, counties and districts (£30.3 million, 2022: £32.0 million); the value of programme-related investments (£4.9 million, 2022: £5.5 million); and the General Fund (£3.3 million, 2022: £4.5 million), which is used to support the central administration of the membership of the RBL. These funds are not immediately and freely available for general use.

## Reserves

In addition to the funds described above, at 30th September, 2023, the RBL was holding £88.5 million (2022: £109.1 million) in liquid and immediately available unrestricted funds ('free reserves'). In common with other charities, the RBL holds free reserves to ensure that our services can continue during a period of unforeseen reduced income or increased expenditure. Our reserves policy is set

with reference to the financial risks facing the charity. The RBL is heavily dependent on volunteer support and donations from the public to enable it to carry out its work. Our biggest risk is that our income suddenly drops because of unforeseen factors beyond our control. In these circumstances, reserves may need to fund operating expenditure while the organisation is put back onto a stable footing.

Our care homes represent an area of financial risk due to the heavily regulated nature of the industry and the ongoing challenges related to staff recruitment and retention. Our reserves may be needed to mitigate against reduced fee income due to lower occupancy and unexpected and unavoidable increases in expenditure.

Our reserves also mitigate against fluctuations in the value of our investments; in particular, the risk that a significant reduction in income coincides with a drop in investment values. Having reserves means that we would not need to sell our investments when it is not advantageous to do so. Finally, high inflation represents a further financial risk due to our reliance on contracts with key suppliers to deliver our charitable activities.

Taking all these risks into consideration, the Trustees have resolved that the RBL should hold minimum free reserves of £60 million. As noted above, at 30th September, 2023, the RBL was holding free reserves of £88.5 million (2022: £109.1 million), which is above the minimum target we have set. During the year, we started to use our surplus reserves to expand our welfare provision, providing emergency support for those in our community who have been hit hardest by the cost-of-living crisis, and expanding our Admiral Nurse and Recovery Services. We plan to spend our remaining surplus reserves over the next two to three years, while ensuring that our financial commitments are closely managed to make sure the RBL's finances are sustainable in the long term.

## Investment properties

Investment properties primarily comprise 259 properties (2022: 275) held by the RBL as Trustee (predominantly under Branch Property Trusts) and let to independent commercial operations, primarily affiliated social clubs. The local RBL branches also have part-time use of the property under the terms of the lease.

The RBL's methodology with regard to the valuation of investment properties is to revalue one-fifth of the properties each year and to carry out a review of the remainder to identify any event that would impair the valuation. Investment property revaluations and impairment reviews are carried out by an internal team of qualified surveyors. For the year ended 30th September, 2023, 66 properties were revalued (2022: 57) and a revaluation gain of £4.3 million (2022: £2.7 million) was recorded in the accounts. The remaining 80% of investment properties were reviewed and no valuation gains or losses were recorded (2022: £0). During the year, the RBL disposed of 6 (2022: 12) investment properties, realising gains on disposal of £0.8 million (2022: £2.8 million).

## Branch Property Trusts

A Branch Property Trust is a property or the proceeds of its sale that is held in a separate charitable trust in connection with an RBL branch. Its charitable purposes are usually restricted to a specific geographical area.

At 30th September, 2023, the RBL held £65.6 million (2022: £62.4 million) (see note 29) in the restricted investment property reserve, representing the market value of 259 (2022: 278) properties, predominantly held under Branch Property Trusts. In addition, £40.8 million (2022: £42.1 million) was held in restricted Branch Property and Area Trust funds, comprising sale proceeds, interest and other income.

The RBL continues to remove or widen the restrictions on Branch Property Trusts that have served their purpose so that these funds can be used more effectively and across the broader range of services needed by those we support today. During the year, decisions were made on 12 Branch Property Trusts (2022: 10), resulting in £3.1 million (2022: £3.3 million) being moved into less restricted and designated Area Trust funds. These funds can now be used to provide welfare support to people in a wider geographical area.

## Programme-related investments

Programme-related investments mainly consist of property-repair loans that are interest-free secured loans to beneficiaries living in their own home to provide housing improvements, together



with a loan to Royal British Legion Industries Limited (RBLI) to help finance the construction of facilities for beneficiaries at the charity's site in Aylesford, Kent. Programme-related investments totalled £4.9 million at the year-end (2022: £5.5 million).

## Grant making

Included in our welfare-service expenditure are grants made to individuals in immediate need after an assessment of the person's financial situation. The RBL also awards grants to households whose case is managed by partner agencies, including the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) or the Royal Air Forces Association.

In 2023, the RBL spent £20.9 million on individual grants (2022: £10.9 million), and more than 29,000 grants were issued (2022: more than 13,000). The significant increase on the previous year resulted from the launch of our Cost of Living Grants programme, which represented a quarter of annual individual grant expenditure. Other high-value grant categories included mobility-related grants (such as riser-recliner chairs and mobility scooters), household furniture, food and clothing.

Grants are also made to organisations, where a third party has skills, facilities or expertise that are unavailable within the RBL's own resources. The RBL invites organisations to submit formal applications, which are then evaluated by the Grants Department, local welfare teams and any subject-matter experts relevant to the application. This information is then reviewed by a Grants Panel, which issues awards to those organisations best able to show that their project will address an unmet need for RBL beneficiaries.

In 2023, grants were awarded to 21 organisations, totalling £4.2 million (2022: 22 organisations, £5.7 million).

## Going concern

The Trustees have considered the ability of the group to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date of signing the accounts. We have forecast our income, expenditure, cash and reserves for the financial years ending 30th September, 2024 and 2025. These forecasts show a planned reduction in our free reserves.

However, we will continue to hold sufficient reserves, cash and liquid investments to meet our liabilities as they fall due. Furthermore, the RBL has high levels of discretionary expenditure and the experience of the pandemic has shown that we can reduce expenditure relatively quickly if fundraising income is lower than expected.

The Trustees have therefore concluded that it remains appropriate to prepare these accounts on a going concern basis.

## Risk management and internal control

The Board of Trustees has responsibility for the oversight of risk management. There has been no change to the risk

Risks	Mitigations
<b>Governance</b> Inability to deliver our strategic objectives due to ineffective leadership and governance	Regular, independent review of governance arrangements and implementing the findings of that review to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular training for Trustees</li> <li>• Performance monitoring of Trustees and Executive Board</li> <li>• Implementation of defined Terms of Reference for Board of Trustees, Executive Board and all Board Committees</li> <li>• Regular reviews of the Royal Charter</li> <li>• General Counsel supported by a qualified team to ensure governance arrangements function and are fit for purpose</li> <li>• Trustees are appointed to fill specific skills gaps</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Sustainability</b> Inability to deliver our mission and look after those we support because of the financial position of the RBL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual budget process</li> <li>• Financial forecasting for short and medium term</li> <li>• Prudent reserves policy</li> <li>• Fundraising strategy</li> <li>• Fundraising income and expenditure reviewed monthly and corrective action taken if there are significant variances to the budget</li> <li>• Sound basis for grant-funding decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding</b> A beneficiary, care home resident, volunteer or employee suffers harm, abuse or neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustee-chaired Safeguarding Committee meets regularly through the year to receive and act on management information</li> <li>• Appointment of a designated safeguarding lead</li> <li>• Multi-level, mandatory training programme</li> <li>• Regular reporting of safeguarding data and risk exposures</li> </ul>
<b>External Economic Environment</b> The risk of beneficiary need being higher than expected, the risk of energy and other costs rising faster than budgeted, leading to cost overruns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review by Executive Board</li> <li>• Beneficiary needs are closely monitored and appropriate tactical solutions deployed in response</li> <li>• Regular forecasts of income, expenditure, cashflow and capital commitments</li> </ul>
<b>Cyber Attack</b> A malicious attack on our IT infrastructure causes material business interruption and/or financial loss, or a significant data breach	A range of defensive controls, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate IT security policy, procedures and accreditations</li> <li>• User awareness and education</li> <li>• Support contracts with external experts</li> <li>• Threat monitoring, detection and response</li> </ul>

model operated by the RBL this year. The risk framework includes a risk-management policy and requires that risks are identified and managed appropriately. This is achieved as follows:

- Risks are owned by a senior executive, usually an Executive Director;
- Risks are required to have controls in place to provide effective mitigation;
- Risk owners ensure that controls are present and effective;
- Risk exposures are known and understood by risk owners and are reported formally to the Executive Board and the Audit and Risk Committee each quarter; and
- There is a strong link between risk management and internal audit so that auditing is used as a tool to check the presence and effectiveness of controls.

The Head of Risk Management oversees and coordinates the risk framework. Regular reports are made to the Executive Board, the Audit & Risk Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Audit & Risk Committee is chaired by a Trustee. The Audit & Risk Committee receives copies of all audit reports. Group entities, such as the National Memorial Arboretum and Poppyscotland, are included in the above risk framework and a consistent risk model is used.

At their last review, the Trustees were satisfied that appropriate and effective controls were in place to mitigate risk exposures. The most significant inherent risks are set out in the table on page 49, together with selected controls from our risk register.

## Public benefit

The Trustees have given due regard to the public-benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. They believe that the extensive welfare support provided to our beneficiaries, along with the other charitable activities undertaken, satisfies the public-benefit requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

## Safeguarding

The RBL delivers regulated activities through our care homes and a wide range of non-regulated welfare, fundraising and membership activities that involve interaction with vulnerable adults at risk and can often involve children. Our staff, volunteers and members have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure the safety of

the people we work with. Recognising our commitment to ensure that those engaged with the RBL can live free from harm, abuse or neglect, the charity implements a range of policies and procedures, including a Safeguarding Policy, Code of Conduct, Welfare Practice Guide and robust recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers.

The RBL deploys a network of trained designated safeguarding leads, who are responsible for reporting safeguarding concerns to statutory agencies and recording all safeguarding incidents on our Legion Assure reporting system. In order to embed a culture of safeguarding awareness, the RBL delivers safeguarding training to all staff and volunteers at the appropriate level.

The Board of Trustees and Executive Board receive appropriate safeguarding training in compliance with the expectations of the UK Charity Regulators.

## Modern Slavery Act 2015

The RBL is committed to ensuring that slavery and human trafficking do not occur in our operations or supply chain. We continue to work with new and existing suppliers to minimise the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking and to ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Our anti-slavery and human trafficking statement is published on our website.

## Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)

The RBL monitors its greenhouse gas emissions and reports in line with the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting regulations (SECR). The scope of this report includes emissions from Scope 1 and 2 Electricity, Gas and Transport and Scope 3 emissions from staff, Trustee and volunteer business travel for the RBL group. Please see table on page 51 for statistics.

This information has been compiled in line with March 2019 HM Government 'Environmental Reporting Guidelines: Including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting Guidance'. The carbon figures have been calculated using the HM Government Greenhouse Gas (GHG) conversion factors for Company Reporting for the relevant years.

Gas and Electricity consumption data (Scope 1 and 2) has been taken from verified billing and invoices supplied by the RBL's energy broker.

Transport data has been taken from RBL internal claimed mileage and expenses tracking. This includes Scope 1 emissions from Company fleet and Scope 3 emissions from Grey fleet, rail and air travel. Gas Oil data has been taken from invoices for delivery of fuel onto our sites throughout the year.

In the year ended 30th September, 2023, the RBL continued to monitor and manage its energy usage and delivered a number of energy-efficiency projects, including:

- Commissioning and installing solar panels on the roof of the National Memorial Arboretum, which are expected to provide approximately 10% of the site's electrical demand across the year;
- Appointing an Energy Manager to lead on energy management and carbon reporting;
- Installing two new, energy-efficient poppy-making machines at our factory in Aylesford;
- Retrofitting energy-efficient boilers at two of our care homes; and
- Carrying out various works at our Head Office in Haig House to reduce our carbon footprint and make better use of the available space.

As a result of these efforts, in the year ended 30th September, 2023, our underlying energy use and associated Scope 1 and 2 emissions fell for the second year running. However, at the same time, our Scope 3 emissions associated with Grey fleet and business travel increased by 63%. While this increase is not unexpected as face-to-face activities continue to increase towards pre-pandemic levels, we are actively seeking ways to reduce our carbon footprint and improve our sustainability.

## Structure, governance and management

The RBL has a head office in London, where the Director General and the supporting Board of six Executive Directors are based. There are offices in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which provide facilities for beneficiaries, members, volunteers and staff. Care home services are delivered through the RBL's premises around the country. The National Memorial

## SECR statistics

Scope	Description	2023		2022	
		(KwH)	tCO <sub>2</sub> e	(KwH)	tCO <sub>2</sub> e
<b>Scope 1</b>	<b>Combustion of fuel on site &amp; transportation</b>				
	Natural Gas	9,367	1,714	9,954	1,817
	Gas Oil	42	11	45	12
	Fleet Travel	247	62	228	58
<b>Total</b>		<b>9,656</b>	<b>1,787</b>	<b>10,227</b>	<b>1,887</b>
<b>Scope 2</b>	<b>Purchased Energy</b>				
	Electricity	4,805	995	5,224	1,103
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,805</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>5,224</b>	<b>1,103</b>
<b>Scope 3</b>	<b>Business Travel</b>				
	Grey Fleet	1,786	433	1,093	207
	Train Travel	-	63	-	40
	Air Travel	-	192	-	141
	Electricity T&D Losses	-	86	-	91
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,786</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>542</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16,247</b>	<b>3,556</b>	<b>16,544</b>	<b>3,532</b>
	<b>Intensity Ratio / £1m Turnover</b>		<b>24.2</b>		<b>22.9</b>
	<b>Turnover (£1m)</b>		<b>147</b>		<b>154</b>

## Notes

The 2022 figures have been updated to include electricity transmission and distribution losses.

Arboretum, the home of the Armed Forces Memorial, is situated in Alrewas, Staffordshire, and the RBL's Contact Centre is based in Cardiff. The headquarters for Poppyscotland are located in Edinburgh. The charity's branches are located throughout England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and overseas.

The RBL's governing document is its Royal Charter of Incorporation and Schedules, which was first granted in 1925. The Board of Trustees has the responsibility for its implementation and review, but charter amendments require a special resolution at the Annual Conference before they can be subsequently ratified by a special resolution of the Board of Trustees and allowed by HM The King in council.

Directors' roles are evaluated using the Hay job-evaluation system, and this supports a process of pay benchmarking. There is an independent Governance &

Nominations Committee, comprised of Trustees, which reviews the annual pay award and agrees the remuneration for the Director General.

## Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance, policy and work of the RBL. All substantive decisions are made by the Board of Trustees within the bounds of the Royal Charter and the RBL's vision, mission and charitable objectives. The Board of Trustees provides overall strategic direction, while administration of the charity is delegated to the Director General and, through him, to the Board of Executive Directors.

The Board of Trustees meets eight times per year and comprises 16 Trustees:

- the National Chair and National Vice Chair are elected by voting branches;
- seven Trustees are elected by voting branches;
- six Trustees are appointed by the

Board of Trustees. Invitation is by open advertisement and selection takes place through the Governance & Nominations Committee; and

- the Chair of the Women's Section is elected by the members of the Women's Section at the Women's Section National Conference.

Trustees are elected or appointed for an initial three-year period and are eligible for a further two terms of three years. The Chair and Vice Chair may only serve one term of three years; however, the Vice Chair may also serve one term of three years as National Chair if so elected by voting branches. Newly elected Trustees are given induction training on their duties and responsibilities as members of the Board of Trustees. Training needs are reviewed on an annual basis and specific training is given to Trustees as required.

Trustees receive no remuneration but are reimbursed for the cost of attending



meetings and other official functions. Trustees may be invited to attend and officiate at Remembrance events and the costs involved in that duty, where relevant, are included in the declared figure for Trustee expenses (Note 15).

## Committees of the Board

The Board of Trustees has seven committees that report to it, all of which have written terms of reference.

Two of the committees facilitate membership matters:

- Membership Council – has responsibility for the direction and implementation of membership issues; and
- Conference Committee – oversees the organisation of the Annual Conference.

Five committees form an integral part of the governance of the charity and oversee the charity's resources:

- Governance & Nominations Committee – makes recommendations on Trustee appointments and staffing arrangements, including pay; and monitors the effectiveness of RBL governance, overseeing improvements where required;
- Audit & Risk Committee – reviews the significant judgements made in the accounts before Board approval. It provides assurance to the Board of Trustees on the effectiveness of internal controls and risk-management procedures. It also oversees the work of external and internal audit;
- Care Services Committee – oversees the delivery of the RBL's care services, including our Admiral Nurse Service and six care homes;
- Finance Committee and its Investments Sub-committee – reviews, recommends and monitors compliance with the reserves and investment policies and provides oversight of corporate property and IT. It reviews the annual budget, oversees and monitors the investment portfolio and addresses any other financial matters referred to it by the Board of Trustees; and
- Branch Property Trusts Trustee Committee – recommends strategy and monitors compliance in relation to the management of properties, income and assets held by the Branch Property Trusts, and approves property disposals.

The day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to the Director General and, through him, to the Board of Executive Directors.

## Corporate structure

The RBL has an extensive corporate structure, comprising:

- the charity;
- 11 wholly owned subsidiaries, five of which are active and six of which are dormant; and
- the Irish ex-Service Trust, for which it acts on behalf of His Majesty's Government as the distributary agent.

On 30th September, 2023, the activities, assets and liabilities of Lady Haig Poppy Factory Limited were transferred to the Earl Haig Fund Scotland (Poppyscotland), its parent charity, in order to further streamline the RBL group structure.

On 13th March, 2024, the directors of the dormant subsidiary Remembrance Travel voted to submit a voluntary action to strike off the company with Companies House.

Further details of the activities and performance of subsidiaries are given in Note 14 to the accounts.

In addition, there are four active organisations that share part of our name:

- Royal British Legion Industries Limited (RBLI), which provides employment, training and support for people, including those with disabilities, plus care and support for ex-serving personnel and families;
- Royal British Legion Poppy Factory Limited in Richmond (the Poppy Factory), which creates paid meaningful employment opportunities for wounded, injured and sick ex-serving personnel;
- The Royal British Legion Attendants Company Trust, which promotes the rehabilitation and resettlement of men and women of His Majesty's Armed Forces who are in need of assistance in civilian life; and
- Royal British Legion Scotland, which helps Scottish ex-serving personnel of all ages to adapt to civilian life.

These four companies are separate charitable trusts with no common shareholding and no other form of control by the RBL. The results of these companies are therefore not included in the consolidated accounts of the RBL.

## Connections to a non-charity

The Trustees have applied the Charity Commission guidance regarding connections to a non-charity and confirm

that they have addressed the risks of any connections. They regularly monitor the connections to non-charities to ensure that the charity's resources are not applied to advance any non-charitable interest.

## Role of the membership and volunteers

The RBL is a charitable organisation with members. Membership matters are overseen by the Membership Council. Around 195,000 members are organised through approximately 2,260 branches operating across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man, with a further 81 branches overseas and nine national branches.

Branches:

- undertake local welfare activities as part of the Branch Community Support scheme;
- undertake fundraising, with central support, for the Poppy Appeal;
- ensure that Remembrance is undertaken locally;
- recruit and retain members; and
- act as RBL representatives in their local community.

Branches report into 52 Section, County and District committees, which consist entirely of volunteers. The RBL provides operational and administrative support to the membership structure delivered by the staff of the Membership Directorate, including the Membership Engagement Team, which is located across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Women's Section provides care and support for the ex-service community through its own welfare schemes, such as financial support to ex-serving women, wives, widows and widowers of ex-serving personnel and their children.

Many members of the RBL belong to one of the 374 clubs (2022: 376) that use the RBL's name under licence but are independent entities; therefore, their financial results are not included in these accounts. There are 209 clubs (2022: 208) that occupy premises owned by the RBL and leased to the club. The RBL depends on the dedication and commitment of thousands of volunteers who give their time and energy in supporting our charitable objectives. Volunteers add value to almost every area of RBL activities, from casework

and fundraising to improving the quality of life of our care home residents. The RBL has in excess of 55,000 volunteers, with more than half of our volunteers undertaking more than one volunteer role in the RBL.

Guidance and advice on volunteer management and support is provided by the centrally based Volunteering Support and Development team. The team focuses on creating a flexible framework to develop volunteer opportunities and on improving the experience of our volunteers. Through our volunteering strategy, we are looking to build a two-way relationship with our volunteers, where how we support them is just as important as how they support us.

## Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity, and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence

for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Trustees' Report (pages 7 to 41) was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf.



Jason Coward, National Chair  
18th April, 2024

# Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the Royal British Legion

## Report on the audit of the financial statements

### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements of the Royal British Legion (the 'charity') and its subsidiaries (the 'group'):

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charity's affairs as at 30th September, 2023 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland"; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

We have audited the financial statements, which comprise:

- the consolidated and parent charity statements of financial activities;
- the consolidated and parent charity balance sheets;
- the consolidated and parent charity cash flow statements; and
- the related notes 1 to 33.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report.

We are independent of the group and of the parent charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting

Council's (the 'FRC's') Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's and parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Auditor's Report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material

misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the group's and the parent charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 151 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting



Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our Auditor's Report.

### **Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

We considered the nature of the group's industry and its control environment, and reviewed the group's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to fraud and compliance with laws and regulations. We also enquired of management and the Trustees about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including those that are specific to the group's business sector.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the group operates in, and identified the key laws and regulations that:

- had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. These included the Charities Act, Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, pensions legislation and tax legislation; and
- do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These included Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity Commission) regulations, The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations, Gambling Commission regulations and Fundraising regulations.

We discussed among the audit engagement team regarding the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements.

As a result of performing the above, we identified the greatest potential for

fraud in the following areas, and our procedures performed to address them are described below:

- revenue recognition, which is related to the accuracy and completeness of legacy income, as this can often include significant judgement over whether conditions have been met for recognition and the amount to recognise: we performed detailed substantive tests on legacy income including on information from third-party legacy notifications, on a sample basis, to verify that they are accurate and complete; and
- branch cash, which is related to the completeness and accuracy of branch cash, as this includes branch data, which can be incomplete and inaccurate: we performed substantive tests on branch cash on a sample basis, to verify that it is complete and accurate.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to the risks identified included the following:

- reviewing financial statement disclosures by testing supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- enquiring of management and in-house/external legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims, and instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance, and reviewing internal audit reports.

## **Report on other legal and regulatory requirements**

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

Under the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, we are required to report in respect of the following matters if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept by the parent charity; or
- the parent charity financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



### **Deloitte LLP**

Statutory Auditor  
Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom  
22nd April 2024

Deloitte LLP is eligible for appointment as auditor for the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as audit of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

# Royal British Legion

## Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 30 September 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £'000	Restricted funds 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from</b>					
Donations and legacies	4	76,715	6,503	<b>83,218</b>	96,076
Charitable activities	5	25,977	5,588	<b>31,565</b>	27,519
Other trading activities	6	20,936	2,989	<b>23,925</b>	21,779
Investments	7	4,356	3,407	<b>7,763</b>	6,361
Other		586	4	<b>590</b>	1,792
<b>Total income</b>		<b>128,570</b>	<b>18,491</b>	<b>147,061</b>	153,527
<b>Expenditure on</b>					
<b>Raising funds</b>	8	<b>38,817</b>	<b>8,083</b>	<b>46,900</b>	42,738
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Care	9	42,102	628	<b>42,730</b>	36,368
Recovery	9	4,608	246	<b>4,854</b>	2,354
Community Welfare	9	39,874	13,403	<b>53,277</b>	42,507
Membership	9	9,518	1,171	<b>10,689</b>	8,032
Comradeship	9	350	-	<b>350</b>	399
Communications and campaigning	9	13,990	-	<b>13,990</b>	12,484
Remembrance and ceremonial	9	2,953	4,885	<b>7,838</b>	6,972
<b>Total charitable activities</b>	9	<b>113,395</b>	<b>20,333</b>	<b>133,728</b>	109,116
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>152,212</b>	<b>28,416</b>	<b>180,628</b>	151,854
<b>Net (expenditure)/income before investment gains</b>		<b>(23,642)</b>	<b>(9,925)</b>	<b>(33,567)</b>	1,673
Net (losses)/gains on disposal of investments		(3,939)	4,468	<b>529</b>	2,813
Unrealised gains/(losses) on revaluation of investments		5,761	330	<b>6,091</b>	(8,228)
<b>Net expenditure before tax</b>		<b>(21,820)</b>	<b>(5,127)</b>	<b>(26,947)</b>	(3,742)
Taxation charge	11	-	-	-	-
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>(21,820)</b>	<b>(5,127)</b>	<b>(26,947)</b>	(3,742)
Transfers between funds	30	(1,277)	1,277	-	-
<b>Other recognised (losses)/gains</b>					
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension scheme	16a	(442)	(204)	<b>(646)</b>	2,053
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>(23,539)</b>	<b>(4,054)</b>	<b>(27,593)</b>	(1,689)
Fund balances brought forward at 1 October		209,117	168,990	<b>378,107</b>	379,796
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 30 September</b>		<b>185,578</b>	<b>164,936</b>	<b>350,514</b>	378,107

The notes on pages 60 to 93 form part of the financial statements.

All amounts relate to continuing operations, and all gains and losses recognised in the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

# Royal British Legion

## Charity Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 30 September 2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £'000	Restricted funds 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from</b>					
Donations and legacies	4	78,799	1,467	<b>80,266</b>	94,409
Charitable activities	5	25,977	3,886	<b>29,863</b>	25,902
Other trading activities	6	10,985	18	<b>11,003</b>	10,924
Investments	7	4,322	3,039	<b>7,361</b>	6,023
Other		586	4	<b>590</b>	1,708
<b>Total income</b>		<b>120,669</b>	<b>8,414</b>	<b>129,083</b>	138,966
<b>Expenditure on</b>					
<b>Raising funds</b>	8	<b>32,233</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>32,362</b>	29,789
<b>Charitable activities</b>					
Care	9	42,102	628	<b>42,730</b>	36,368
Recovery	9	4,608	246	<b>4,854</b>	2,354
Community Welfare	9	42,900	9,661	<b>52,561</b>	42,229
Membership	9	9,518	1,144	<b>10,662</b>	7,999
Comradeship	9	350	-	<b>350</b>	399
Communications and campaigning	9	13,990	-	<b>13,990</b>	12,484
Remembrance and ceremonial	9	2,953	629	<b>3,582</b>	3,374
<b>Total charitable activities</b>	9	<b>116,421</b>	<b>12,308</b>	<b>128,729</b>	105,207
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>148,654</b>	<b>12,437</b>	<b>161,091</b>	134,996
<b>Net (expenditure)/income before investment gains</b>		<b>(27,985)</b>	<b>(4,023)</b>	<b>(32,008)</b>	3,970
Net (losses)/gains on disposal of investments		(3,939)	5,079	<b>1,140</b>	2,979
Unrealised gains/(losses) on revaluation of investments		5,761	(469)	<b>5,292</b>	(6,466)
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>(26,163)</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>(25,576)</b>	483
Transfers between funds	30	1,749	(1,749)	-	-
<b>Other recognised (losses)/gains</b>					
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension scheme	16a	(442)	-	(442)	1,466
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>(24,856)</b>	<b>(1,162)</b>	<b>(26,018)</b>	1,949
Fund balances brought forward at 1 October		207,053	132,182	339,235	337,286
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 30 September</b>		<b>182,197</b>	<b>131,020</b>	<b>313,217</b>	339,235

The notes on pages 60 to 93 form part of the financial statements.

All amounts relate to continuing operations, and all gains and losses recognised in the year are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.



# Royal British Legion

## Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheets as at 30 September 2023

	Note	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Intangible assets	17	679	1,202	622	1,120
Tangible assets	18	82,914	81,573	57,677	56,848
Investments	19	172,944	172,317	167,313	164,143
Investment properties	20	65,556	62,421	65,556	62,421
Programme-related investments	21	4,928	5,529	4,928	5,529
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>327,021</b>	<b>323,042</b>	<b>296,096</b>	<b>290,061</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Stocks		2,366	2,489	-	-
Debtors	22	9,404	10,908	8,081	10,082
Cash at hand and in bank	23	43,775	72,413	38,611	66,473
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>55,545</b>	<b>85,810</b>	<b>46,692</b>	<b>76,555</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	24	(24,549)	(21,616)	(24,017)	(19,927)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>30,996</b>	<b>64,194</b>	<b>22,675</b>	<b>56,628</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>358,017</b>	<b>387,236</b>	<b>318,771</b>	<b>346,689</b>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	24	(4,276)	(5,891)	(4,276)	(5,876)
Provisions for liabilities	26	(1,866)	(2,166)	(1,278)	(1,578)
<b>Net assets excluding pension liability</b>		<b>351,875</b>	<b>379,179</b>	<b>313,217</b>	<b>339,235</b>
Defined benefit pension liability	16b	(1,361)	(1,072)	-	-
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>350,514</b>	<b>378,107</b>	<b>313,217</b>	<b>339,235</b>
<b>Funds</b>					
Total unrestricted funds	28	185,578	209,117	182,197	207,053
Total restricted funds	29	164,936	168,990	131,020	132,182
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>350,514</b>	<b>378,107</b>	<b>313,217</b>	<b>339,235</b>

The notes on pages 60 to 93 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements of the Royal British Legion, registered charity no. 219279, were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 18th April, 2024.

These were signed on its behalf by:



**Jason Coward**  
National Chairman

# Royal British Legion

## Consolidated and Charity Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 30 September 2023

	Note	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Net cash flow from operating activities</b>	A	<b>(34,716)</b>	(3,817)	<b>(31,498)</b>	(2,739)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		7,763	6,361	7,361	6,023
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(4,707)	(3,659)	(3,466)	(2,378)
Proceeds from sale of investment properties		1,944	8,630	1,944	8,630
Sale/(Purchase) of investments		1,078	(1,086)	(2,203)	(2,313)
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>		<b>6,078</b>	10,246	<b>3,636</b>	9,962
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>(28,638)</b>	6,428	<b>(27,862)</b>	7,222
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</b>		<b>72,413</b>	65,985	<b>66,473</b>	59,251
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>	23	<b>43,775</b>	72,413	<b>38,611</b>	66,473
<b>A. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities</b>		<b>2023 Group £'000</b>	<b>2022 Group £'000</b>	<b>2023 Charity £'000</b>	<b>2022 Charity £'000</b>
Net (Expenditure)/income for the year (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)		(26,947)	(3,742)	(25,576)	483
Adjustments for:					
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment charges		3,889	4,071	3,135	3,322
(Losses)/gains on investments		(6,784)	5,465	(6,046)	3,613
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		(7,763)	(6,361)	(7,361)	(6,023)
Loss on disposal of tangible and intangible fixed assets		-	119	-	-
Decrease in stock		123	212	-	-
Decrease/(increase) in programme-related investments		601	(1,520)	601	(1,520)
Decrease in debtors		1,504	861	2,001	322
Increase/(decrease) in creditors		1,318	(2,851)	2,490	(2,305)
(Decrease)/increase in provisions		(300)	367	(300)	(177)
Adjustment in respect of pension funding		(357)	(438)	(442)	(454)
<b>Net cash flow from operating activities</b>		<b>(34,716)</b>	(3,817)	<b>(31,498)</b>	(2,739)

# Royal British Legion

## Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023

### 1 Principal accounting policies

#### Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including the 'Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (SORP 2019)', and applicable UK law. The financial statements are prepared on an accruals basis except that the results from branches have been extracted from returns submitted on a receipts and payments basis. The branch financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June. The branch results included in these accounts are for the year to 30 June 2023 with prior year comparatives (2022) for the year to 30 June 2022.

The group meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102 and the financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

#### Group financial statements

These financial statements comprise the central General and Benevolent funds vested in the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Royal British Legion's ("the RBL") Royal Charter. As agreed with the Charity Commission and in accordance with FRS 102, they include the results, assets and liabilities of the RBL's counties, districts, branches and Women's Section. The RBL's policy is to consolidate results of all branches, counties and districts based upon receipt of individual returns. Where returns are not received, assets are included at the previously reported value adjusted for known transactions. The subsidiaries and organisations listed in note 14 have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Four organisations that carry the RBL's name but are not controlled by the RBL have not been included in these financial statements; namely, Royal British Legion Industries, The Royal British Legion Poppy Factory Limited, The Royal British Legion Attendants Company Trust and Royal British Legion Scotland. The accounts do not include the results of affiliated social clubs, which are not controlled by the charity but are separately registered organisations licensed to use the RBL's name.

#### Fund accounting

*Unrestricted funds* are expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity.

*Restricted funds* represent grants, donations, legacies and property that are given by the donor for specific purposes and that must be used for that purpose. All restricted funds are held within the Benevolent fund unless otherwise stated. Restricted funds include permanent endowment funds, which are not material and are not therefore shown separately on the face of the balance sheet. The funds of The National Memorial Arboretum Company Limited and its subsidiary (NMA (Enterprises) Limited), the Earl Haig Fund Scotland and the Lady Haig Poppy Factory (Poppyscotland Group), and the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland are held within restricted funds since their objects are narrower than those of the Royal British Legion group.

#### Income

Income is recognised in the year in which the RBL is entitled to receipt of that income and when the amount can be measured with reasonable accuracy. In accordance with this policy:

- *Legacies* are included as follows: Pecuniary legacies are recognised when the legacy has been received or if, before receipt, there is sufficient evidence to provide the necessary certainty that the legacy will be received. Residual legacies are recognised on receipt of Estate Accounts. Legacies subject to a life interest held by another party are not recognised.
- *Grants* are included when the conditions for recognition as set out in the funding contract have been complied with.
- *Donations* are accounted for in the year of receipt. Poppy Appeal donations are accounted for when banked.
- *Fundraising lottery income* is recognised when the lottery draw has taken place. Income received in advance for future lottery draws is deferred until the lottery draw takes place.
- *Fees from residential care homes* are recognised on an accruals basis.
- *Membership fees* are recognised on an accruals basis.
- *Investment income* from the centrally held investment portfolio is accounted for on an accruals basis and includes dividends declared but not yet received. Investment income includes rental income earned by branches.
- *Income received through branches* from fundraising and other activities is recognised for branches on the basis of branch returns for the year to 30 June 2023.
- *Gifts in kind and donated services* are recognised when received. They are valued at market value based on information provided by the donor, or if no such information is available, based on suitable alternative sources of market value available to the RBL.

The economic value of time given by volunteers is not included in these financial statements as it cannot be reasonably and accurately calculated.



## Royal British Legion

### Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023

#### Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Irrecoverable VAT is included with the expense items to which it relates. Expenditure comprises:

- *Cost of raising funds* includes expenditure on poppies and other fundraising items, staff and related expenditure of the Poppy Appeal, costs of the central fundraising department, commercial (trading) activities and investment management fees.
- *Charitable activities* includes expenditure directly related to the delivery of the services (including staff costs) provided by the charity to eligible beneficiaries, and includes the cost of residential care, recovery services, community welfare services, and Remembrance and comradeship. It also includes the cost of supporting and maintaining the RBL's extensive membership and the costs of campaigning on behalf of beneficiaries. The cost of evaluating, supporting and managing charitable programmes is also included and further analysed in the notes to the accounts.
- *Certain campaign costs* are allocated between *Cost of raising funds* and *Charitable activities* on the basis of the percentages of space within the literature relating to fundraising and raising awareness respectively.
- *Support costs* include the central functions such as general management, financial administration, information technology, human resources, governance and facilities management.

Grants payable are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when awarded and the recipient has a valid expectation of receipt, thus creating a constructive or legal obligation.

Future grant expenditure commitments are included within creditors on the balance sheet at their net present value, using a discount rate equivalent to the yield on Treasury Gilt over the period of the grant.

#### Allocation of costs

Where possible, the RBL's operating costs, which include staff costs, are allocated directly to the various categories of charitable expenditure or cost of raising funds. Where costs are not directly attributable to any category, they have been apportioned on an appropriate basis to reflect, in each case, an estimate of the efforts and resources devoted to each category of activity – see note 13. Activities that are predominantly outsourced bear no allocation of support costs.

#### Stocks, poppies and wreaths

The majority of stock relates to Poppy Shop products held for resale by Royal British Legion Trading Ltd. Stock also includes poppies and wreaths produced at the Lady Haig Poppy Factory, which are manufactured for external resale. Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value and include direct costs of labour and materials plus allocation of general overheads. Poppies and wreaths produced for distribution during the Poppy Appeal are expensed immediately.

#### Staff pension schemes

There are three staff pension schemes, which are accounted for in accordance with FRS 102 section 28. There are two defined benefit schemes closed to future accrual: the Royal British Legion Staff Pension Fund and the Earl Haig Defined Benefit Scheme. The remaining one is a current, defined contribution scheme: the Group Flexible Retirement Plan. Further details are included in note 16 to the accounts.

For the defined benefit schemes, valuations are undertaken by an independent actuary. The current service costs of the Earl Haig Defined Benefit Scheme are charged to employee costs over the anticipated period of employment. Net pension finance income or costs are included immediately in other income or employee costs as appropriate. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately on the face of the Statement of Financial Activities. The RBL's share of the scheme deficits is included as a liability on the balance sheet when in deficit; however, share of the scheme assets when in surplus is not recognised in accordance with scheme rules as employer contributions cannot be withdrawn once they are paid into the scheme.

For the defined contribution scheme, the amount charged to the Statement of Financial Activities represents the employer contributions payable for the year.

# Royal British Legion

## Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023

### Investments and bank deposits

Fixed asset investments are stated at market value, normally using prices obtained from an independent pricing source. Funds and unit trusts are generally priced on a net asset value basis. Structured products are valued on a market to market basis. Unquoted investments are valued in accordance with the International Private Equity and Venture Capital valuation guidelines or held at cost. Investments where a price is not readily available, that are held in an execution-only portfolio, will be valued at the last publicly available price. Gains and losses arising from either the change in market value or on sale are included in the Statement of Financial Activities. Income from listed investments is accrued when due for payment. Interest on deposits is accrued on a daily basis.

Properties not used for charitable purposes are classified as investment properties and are included in investments at market value. Investment properties are revalued on a rolling five-year basis, with 20% of properties being revalued each year internally by qualified surveyors in our Estates team. The remaining 80% of properties are reviewed for material changes.

Programme-related investments are held at the amount invested less any impairment. These are reviewed on an annual basis and any impairment is immediately recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

### Tangible and intangible fixed assets

Purchases of individual tangible and intangible fixed assets costing more than £50,000, or purchases related to capital projects costing more than £50,000 in total, are capitalised.

*Functional properties (freehold and leasehold)* used by the charity are included at cost, where known, or valuation at date of acquisition. Branch properties acquired or gifted before 1 October 1995 where the original cost cannot be established are included at a nominal value of £1 each. Depreciation on functional properties is provided on the cost of buildings on a straight line basis over 50 years or the term of the lease if less. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the term of the lease. The head office building, Haig House, is depreciated over its expected useful life of 33 years.

*Plant, machinery and equipment* where capitalised is included at cost. Depreciation is calculated over 3–12 years from the month of first use.

*Software, databases and licences* where capitalised are included at cost, which includes the cost of internal development where applicable. Amortisation is provided over 5 years from the month of first use where no distinct life of the asset can be identified at the point of capitalisation; where the life is known – for example, licences – amortisation is provided over the life of the asset.

Tangible and intangible fixed assets that are under construction are classified as Assets Under Construction and are transferred into the appropriate category on project completion, when depreciation then commences.

The useful economic lives and residual lives of fixed assets are reviewed at the end of each accounting year to consider whether there has been an impairment. Impairments are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities.

### Heritage assets

The Armed Forces Memorial (AFM) is included as a heritage asset in the accounts of The National Memorial Arboretum Company Limited at a nominal value of £1. The Trustees consider that the cost of ascertaining a definite value through a surveyor's valuation significantly outweighs the benefit gained from such a valuation.

Other heritage assets (being trees at the National Memorial Arboretum) are included within plant and machinery in tangible fixed assets and are not depreciated (as they are deemed to have indeterminable lives).

### Finance and Operating Leases

Instalments payable under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease. Any lease incentives (such as rent-free periods) are spread over the life of the lease. The group does not have any material finance leases.

# Royal British Legion

## Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023

### Taxation

The activities of the RBL and its charitable subsidiaries are exempt from corporation tax under Chapter 3 of Part 11 to the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent that they are applied to the organisation's charitable objects. The trading subsidiaries do not generally pay UK corporation tax because their policy is to pay their taxable profits as Gift Aid to the RBL.

### Foreign exchange

The RBL has no significant exposure to foreign exchange gains or losses. Foreign branches and districts make returns once a year and their results, along with those of the Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland, are included in these accounts converted to Sterling at the exchange rate as at 30 September 2022.

### Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the group becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. The group only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction price (including transaction costs) and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered and net of any bad debt provision. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due. Creditors and provisions are recognised where the group has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party, and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

## 2 Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

### 2.1 Critical accounting judgements

In application of the accounting policies, which are described in note 1, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources, and to disclose material judgements here. The Trustees consider that no material judgements have been made during the production of the financial statements.

### 2.2 Key sources of estimation uncertainty

The following are assumptions about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant risk of resulting in a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year:

The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the year in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that year, or in the year of the revision and future years if the revision affects both current and future years.

### Investment property valuation

The fair value of investment properties is measured using valuation techniques (e.g. completed sales values from transactions that concluded after the valuation date, details of offers produced as the outcome of marketing programmes, Charities Act compliant valuation reports and marketing agent's commentary).

Where possible, the inputs to these valuation techniques are based on observable data, but where this is not possible, judgement is required in establishing fair values. These judgements typically include considerations such as uncertainty and risk. However, changes in assumptions used could affect the fair value of the Group's assets.

Significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement include management assumptions; for example, regarding the potential to redevelop.

Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the investment properties.

### Retirement benefit liabilities

As disclosed in note 16, the Group has defined benefit schemes. Year-end recognition of the liabilities under this scheme and the valuation of assets held to fund these liabilities require a number of significant assumptions and complex judgements to be made, relating to levels of scheme membership, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates, key financial market indicators such as inflation and expectations on future salary growth and asset returns.

These assumptions are made by the Group in conjunction with the schemes' actuaries engaged to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.



### 3 Consolidated Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £'000	Restricted funds 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from</b>			
Donations and legacies	89,337	6,739	96,076
Charitable activities	24,369	3,150	27,519
Other trading activities	18,644	3,135	21,779
Investments	2,915	3,446	6,361
Other	348	1,444	1,792
<b>Total income</b>	<b>135,613</b>	<b>17,914</b>	<b>153,527</b>
<b>Expenditure on</b>			
<b>Raising funds</b>	<b>35,348</b>	<b>7,390</b>	<b>42,738</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Care	35,624	744	36,368
Personnel Recovery Centres	2,327	27	2,354
Community Welfare	31,939	10,568	42,507
Membership	7,556	476	8,032
Comradeship	399	-	399
Communications and campaigning	12,458	26	12,484
Remembrance and ceremonial	2,942	4,030	6,972
<b>Total charitable activities</b>	<b>93,245</b>	<b>15,871</b>	<b>109,116</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>128,593</b>	<b>23,261</b>	<b>151,854</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains</b>	<b>7,020</b>	<b>(5,347)</b>	<b>1,673</b>
Net (losses)/gains on disposal of investments	(2,539)	5,352	2,813
Unrealised losses on revaluation of investments	(5,393)	(2,835)	(8,228)
<b>Net expenditure before tax</b>	<b>(912)</b>	<b>(2,830)</b>	<b>(3,742)</b>
Taxation charge	-	-	-
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>	<b>(912)</b>	<b>(2,830)</b>	<b>(3,742)</b>
Transfers between funds	373	(373)	-
<b>Other recognised (losses)/gains</b>			
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	1,466	587	2,053
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>(2,616)</b>	<b>(1,689)</b>
Fund balances brought forward at 1 October	208,190	171,606	379,796
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 30 September</b>	<b>209,117</b>	<b>168,990</b>	<b>378,107</b>

**3a Charity Comparative Statement of Financial Activities**

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £'000	Restricted funds 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
<b>Income and endowments from</b>			
Donations and legacies	93,133	1,276	94,409
Charitable activities	24,369	1,533	25,902
Other trading activities	10,910	14	10,924
Investments	2,915	3,108	6,023
Other	348	1,360	1,708
<b>Total income</b>	<b>131,675</b>	<b>7,291</b>	<b>138,966</b>
<b>Expenditure on</b>			
<b>Raising funds</b>	<b>29,696</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>29,789</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Care	35,624	744	36,368
Personnel Recovery Centres	2,327	27	2,354
Community Welfare	34,899	7,330	42,229
Membership	7,556	443	7,999
Comradeship	399	-	399
Communications and campaigning	12,458	26	12,484
Remembrance and ceremonial	2,942	432	3,374
<b>Total charitable activities</b>	<b>96,205</b>	<b>9,002</b>	<b>105,207</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>125,901</b>	<b>9,095</b>	<b>134,996</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains</b>	<b>5,774</b>	<b>(1,804)</b>	<b>3,970</b>
Net (losses)/gains on disposal of investments	(2,539)	5,518	2,979
Unrealised losses on revaluation of investments	(5,393)	(1,073)	(6,466)
<b>Net (expenditure)/income for the year</b>	<b>(2,158)</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>483</b>
Transfers between funds	3,333	(3,333)	-
<b>Other recognised gains</b>			
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	1,466	-	1,466
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>(692)</b>	<b>1,949</b>
Fund balances brought forward at 1 October	204,412	132,874	337,286
<b>Fund balances carried forward at 30 September</b>	<b>207,053</b>	<b>132,182</b>	<b>339,235</b>

#### 4 Donations and legacies

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Voluntary income</b>				
Donations	20,561	25,723	20,573	26,812
Legacies	23,344	28,108	22,475	27,536
The Poppy Appeal	39,313	42,245	37,218	40,061
<b>Total donations and legacies</b>	<b>83,218</b>	<b>96,076</b>	<b>80,266</b>	<b>94,409</b>

The total of the Poppy Appeal launched in October 2022 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was £39.313 million (2021: £42.245 million). This includes donations collected of £39.133 million (2022: £41.504 million) and legacies of £180,000 (2022: £741,000).

At 30 September 2023, the RBL had been advised of its interest in residuary and pecuniary legacies with estimated values of £1.870 million (2022: £3.412 million) and these are included in the accounts. Not included in the accounts are interests in life interest legacies with a value of £157,000 (2022: £141,000) where the conditions for acceptance had not been met. The RBL has also been notified of legacies estimated at a potential value of £24.438 million (2022: £21.865 million). These are a mixture of residuary legacies that are not recognised in these accounts as confirmation of entitlement has not been received and the value cannot be confirmed at the balance sheet date, and pecuniary legacies where the executor has not confirmed sufficient funds will exist in the estate once realised.

Included in donations above is pro bono legal support of £146,000 (2022: £204,000) from J A Kemp, Mayer Brown LLP and Withers LLP. Also included are other benefits-in-kind valued at £595,000 (2022: £200,000).

#### 5 Charitable activities

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Grants for Welfare Services and Remembrance</b>				
Ex-service charities and other organisations (almonisation)	3,246	2,950	3,183	2,835
Contributions for Remembrance activities	320	554	-	-
Other grants and contributions	1,356	1,788	745	1,543
<b>Total grants for Welfare Services and Remembrance</b>	<b>4,922</b>	<b>5,292</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>4,378</b>
Fees from residential care homes	21,558	17,143	21,558	17,143
Membership fees	4,017	4,179	4,014	4,177
Income from charitable services	1,068	905	363	204
<b>Total other income from charitable activities</b>	<b>26,643</b>	<b>22,227</b>	<b>25,935</b>	<b>21,524</b>
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b>31,565</b>	<b>27,519</b>	<b>29,863</b>	<b>25,902</b>

Almonisation income is the contribution from other charities towards grants paid by the RBL to individuals when the recipient of assistance is also a beneficiary of these other charities.

Income from other grants and contributions includes non-performance-related grants of which £nil are government grants (2022: £0.5 million). In 2022, this related to income from the Infection Control Grant. There were no unfulfilled conditions or other contingencies relating to government grant income recognised in either year.

**6 Other trading activities**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
Fundraising events income	<b>2,681</b>	2,355	<b>2,680</b>	2,354
Fundraising lotteries	<b>7,945</b>	8,371	<b>7,945</b>	8,371
Income from commercial activities	<b>12,926</b>	10,887	<b>5</b>	33
Licence fees and royalties	<b>96</b>	53	<b>96</b>	53
Advertising in the Legion magazine	<b>277</b>	113	<b>277</b>	113
<b>Total income from other trading activities</b>	<b>23,925</b>	21,779	<b>11,003</b>	10,924

**7 Investment income**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
Dividends and interest on listed investments	<b>3,398</b>	3,085	<b>3,121</b>	2,764
Investment income on funds held by branches	<b>409</b>	514	<b>409</b>	514
Rentals from investment properties	<b>2,633</b>	2,725	<b>2,633</b>	2,725
Bank deposit interest	<b>1,323</b>	37	<b>1,198</b>	20
<b>Total investment income</b>	<b>7,763</b>	6,361	<b>7,361</b>	6,023

Rentals from investment properties with a market value of £65.556 million (note 20) at 30 September 2023 (2022: £62.421 million) are in most cases received in relation to the rental of properties by RBL clubs. The clubs are independent entities that use the RBL's name under licence and promote the work of the RBL in return for discounted rentals, which in many cases are lower than could be obtained in a commercial environment.



8 Cost of raising funds				
	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
Donations costs	9,933	8,595	8,290	6,750
Legacies costs	2,330	2,089	1,799	1,695
Poppy Appeal costs	15,859	15,443	14,233	13,681
<b>Cost of raising voluntary income</b>	<b>28,122</b>	<b>26,127</b>	<b>24,322</b>	<b>22,126</b>
Fundraising events costs	3,661	3,829	3,661	3,829
Fundraising lotteries costs	3,909	3,356	3,909	3,356
Commercial activities (trading)	10,761	8,941	33	4
<b>Cost of activities to raise funds</b>	<b>18,331</b>	<b>16,126</b>	<b>7,603</b>	<b>7,189</b>
<b>Investment management</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>474</b>
<b>Total cost of raising funds</b>	<b>46,900</b>	<b>42,738</b>	<b>32,362</b>	<b>29,789</b>

The total cost of raising funds for the group of £46.900 million (2022: £42.738 million) includes direct costs of £40.805 million (2022: £36.078 million) and allocated support costs of £6.095 million (2022: £6.660 million). Allocated support costs are described in further detail at note 13.

Certain direct costs of campaigns have a parallel purpose of increasing public awareness and fundraising, and as a result, these costs have been allocated between the cost of raising funds in note 8 and charitable activities in note 9 on the basis of the percentages of space within the literature relating to fundraising and raising awareness respectively. The total expenditure of this nature is £15.030 million (2022: £13.279 million), of which £11.507 million (2022: £10.227 million) remains within cost of raising funds representing the fundraising element of the literature, and £3.523 million (2022: £3.052 million) has been reallocated into charitable activities representing the raising awareness element.

9 Analysis of charitable activities					
	Note	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
Residential care homes		42,730	36,018	42,730	36,018
Welfare break centres		-	350	-	350
<b>Total care</b>		<b>42,730</b>	<b>36,368</b>	<b>42,730</b>	<b>36,368</b>
<b>Recovery</b>		<b>4,854</b>	<b>2,354</b>	<b>4,854</b>	<b>2,354</b>
Welfare grants to individuals		20,856	10,850	19,777	9,963
Grants to other organisations	10	4,236	5,711	6,180	7,820
Information, advice and support		23,583	20,351	22,002	18,851
Welfare cost in branches, counties and districts		4,602	5,595	4,602	5,595
<b>Total community welfare</b>		<b>53,277</b>	<b>42,507</b>	<b>52,561</b>	<b>42,229</b>
Central membership support		5,314	3,971	5,287	3,938
Recruitment, development, training		370	538	370	538
Support to branches with clubs		249	239	249	239
The Legion magazine		715	681	715	681
Membership costs in branches, counties and districts		4,041	2,603	4,041	2,603
<b>Total membership</b>		<b>10,689</b>	<b>8,032</b>	<b>10,662</b>	<b>7,999</b>
<b>Comradeship</b>		<b>350</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>399</b>
Direct cost of communication and campaigning		10,467	9,432	10,467	9,432
Allocated cost of communication and campaigning		3,523	3,052	3,523	3,052
<b>Total communication and campaigning</b>		<b>13,990</b>	<b>12,484</b>	<b>13,990</b>	<b>12,484</b>
Festival of Remembrance		1,064	1,120	1,064	1,120
Ceremonial and commemorative events		2,633	2,325	2,518	2,254
National Memorial Arboretum operating costs		4,141	3,527	-	-
<b>Total Remembrance and ceremonial</b>		<b>7,838</b>	<b>6,972</b>	<b>3,582</b>	<b>3,374</b>
<b>Total cost of charitable activities</b>		<b>133,728</b>	<b>109,116</b>	<b>128,729</b>	<b>105,207</b>

The total cost of charitable activities for the group of £133.728 million (2022: £109.11 million) includes direct costs of £111.475 million (2022: £89.772 million) and allocated support costs of £22.253 million (2022: £19.344 million). Allocated support costs are described in further detail at note 13.

As stated in note 8, the cost of charitable activities includes an allocation of £3.523 million (2022: £3.052 million) relating to costs associated with space within campaign literature relating to raising awareness.

## 10 Grants awarded to other organisations

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Grants awarded by the Charity</b>				
Army Families Federation	-	8	-	8
Combat Stress	<b>2,053</b>	2,300	<b>2,053</b>	2,300
The Matthew Project	<b>6</b>	11	<b>6</b>	11
National Memorial Arboretum	-	-	<b>2,500</b>	2,300
Never Such Innocence	<b>4</b>	-	<b>4</b>	-
Poppyscotland	-	-	<b>526</b>	660
RFEA The Forces Employment Charity	<b>20</b>	2,108	<b>20</b>	2,108
Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League	<b>55</b>	14	<b>55</b>	14
Shelter	-	14	-	14
Voices of Armed Forces Children	-	300	-	300
X-Forces	<b>191</b>	2	<b>191</b>	2
Cancellation of grant commitment – nil (2022: nil)	<b>(20)</b>	-	<b>(20)</b>	-
Grants to 7 other charities and voluntary organisations (2022: 7)	<b>845</b>	103	<b>845</b>	103
<b>Grants awarded by Poppyscotland</b>				
Citizens Advice Scotland	<b>487</b>	393	-	-
NHS Highland	<b>325</b>	164	-	-
Grants to 6 other charities and voluntary organisations (2022: 5)	<b>270</b>	294	-	-
<b>Total grants to other organisations</b>	<b>4,236</b>	5,711	<b>6,180</b>	7,820

Grants awarded may relate to commitments for multiple future years. For more information on grant commitments, see note 25.

**11 Taxation**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000
Current tax credit:		
UK corporation tax (see below)	-	-
Adjustment to deferred tax	-	-
<b>Total tax charge/(credit) on income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

The taxation credits and charges above arise in the trading subsidiary operations.

The differences between the total tax charge shown above and the amount calculated by applying the standard rate of UK corporation tax to the surplus before tax in the trading subsidiary operations are as follows:

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000
Surplus on ordinary activities before tax	<b>3,468</b>	2,501
Surplus on ordinary activities multiplied by applicable rate of corporation tax of 19% (2022: 19%)	<b>659</b>	476
Unutilised losses	-	-
Effects of:		
Post-balance sheet event: effect of Gift Aid donations (see note 33)	<b>(659)</b>	(476)
Tax credit not recognised due to uncertainty over future profits	-	-
UK corporation tax charge/(credit) for the year	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**12 Net incoming resources for the year is stated after charging:**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
Fees payable to the charity's auditor for the audit of the charity's annual accounts	<b>274</b>	178	<b>274</b>	178
Fees payable to the charity's auditor for the audit of the subsidiaries' annual accounts	<b>172</b>	139	-	-
Fees payable to the charity's auditor for other services:				
Assurance services other than audit or independent examination	<b>3</b>	1	<b>3</b>	1
Tax advisory services	<b>11</b>	10	<b>5</b>	3
Branch, county and district audit and examination fees	<b>37</b>	26	<b>37</b>	26
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment charges	<b>3,889</b>	4,071	<b>3,135</b>	3,322
Rentals under operating leases	<b>1,505</b>	1,590	<b>1,482</b>	1,491



13 Support costs								
	Head Office Central 2023 £'000	Facilities Management 2023 £'000	Human Resources 2023 £'000	Finance and IT 2023 £'000	Governance 2023 £'000	Total Charity 2023 £'000	Subsidiaries 2023 £'000	Total Group 2023 £'000
Donations costs	139	175	203	718	32	1,267	397	1,664
Legacies costs	33	42	49	172	8	304	143	447
Poppy Appeal costs	-	419	485	1,716	76	2,696	482	3,178
Fundraising events costs	49	62	72	255	11	449	1	450
Fundraising lotteries costs	39	49	57	202	9	356	-	356
<b>Cost of raising funds</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>3,063</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>5,072</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>6,095</b>
<b>Care homes</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,348</b>	<b>2,721</b>	<b>2,880</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>8,375</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,375</b>
<b>Personnel Recovery Centres</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>99</b>
Information, advice and support	761	958	1,112	3,930	174	6,936	829	7,765
Welfare cost in branches, counties and districts	28	35	41	144	6	254	-	254
<b>Community welfare</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>4,074</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>7,190</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>8,019</b>
Central membership support	150	190	220	777	34	1,371	27	1,398
Recruitment, development, training	11	14	16	57	3	101	-	101
Support to branches with clubs	9	11	13	45	2	80	-	80
Membership costs in branches, counties and districts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Membership</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1,579</b>
<b>Comradeship</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Direct cost of communications and campaigning	199	251	291	1,028	45	1,814	-	1,814
<b>Communications and campaigning</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1,814</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,814</b>
Ceremonial and commemorative events	20	25	29	104	5	183	109	292
Remembrance tours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
National Memorial Arboretum operating costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,075	2,075
<b>Remembrance and ceremonial</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>2,367</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>4,476</b>	<b>8,999</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>19,213</b>	<b>3,040</b>	<b>22,253</b>
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>4,607</b>	<b>5,342</b>	<b>12,062</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>24,285</b>	<b>4,063</b>	<b>28,348</b>

Support costs are allocated on the basis of FTE staff numbers. Support costs associated with the awarding of grants to individuals and organisations are included within information, advice and support above.

13 Support costs continued								
	Head Office Central 2022 £'000	Facilities Management 2022 £'000	Human Resources 2022 £'000	Finance and IT 2022 £'000	Governance 2022 £'000	Total Charity 2022 £'000	Subsidiaries 2022 £'000	Total Group 2022 £'000
Donations costs	116	200	185	610	63	1,174	394	1,568
Legacies costs	30	51	48	157	16	302	94	396
Poppy Appeal costs	-	482	448	1,472	152	2,554	465	3,019
Fundraising events costs	139	239	222	730	76	1,406	-	1,406
Fundraising lotteries costs	27	46	43	140	15	271	-	271
<b>Cost of raising funds</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>1,018</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>3,109</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>5,707</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>6,660</b>
Residential care homes	-	2,377	2,206	2,146	751	7,480	-	7,480
Welfare break centres	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Care</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,377</b>	<b>2,206</b>	<b>2,146</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>7,480</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,480</b>
<b>Personnel Recovery Centres</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>34</b>
Information, advice and support	586	1,008	936	3,077	319	5,926	709	6,635
Welfare cost in branches, counties and districts	29	49	46	150	16	290	-	290
<b>Community welfare</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>3,227</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>6,216</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>6,925</b>
Central membership support	104	180	167	548	57	1,056	33	1,089
Recruitment, development, training	11	20	18	60	6	115	-	115
Support to branches with clubs	7	13	12	39	4	75	-	75
Membership costs in branches, counties and districts	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Membership</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1,279</b>
<b>Comradeship</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>31</b>
Direct cost of communications and campaigning	151	260	242	795	82	1,530	-	1,530
<b>Communications and campaigning</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,530</b>
Ceremonial and commemorative events	18	32	29	97	10	186	49	235
Remembrance tours	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
National Memorial Arboretum operating costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,830	1,830
<b>Remembrance and ceremonial</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>1,879</b>	<b>2,065</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>3,955</b>	<b>3,671</b>	<b>6,938</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>16,723</b>	<b>2,621</b>	<b>19,344</b>
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>1,221</b>	<b>4,973</b>	<b>4,617</b>	<b>10,047</b>	<b>1,572</b>	<b>22,430</b>	<b>3,574</b>	<b>26,004</b>

Support costs are allocated on the basis of FTE staff numbers. Support costs associated with the awarding of grants to individuals and organisations are included within information, advice and support above.

#### 14 Activities of consolidated subsidiaries and organisations

The RBL has 11 wholly owned subsidiaries, nine of which are consolidated into these accounts as described below. There are a further two subsidiaries, which are dormant with no assets so have no figures to consolidate.

The results of the subsidiary entities are shown in the table below. All subsidiaries have 30 September year ends and are registered in the UK, with the exception of Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland (registered in the Republic of Ireland).

	The National Memorial Arboretum Company 2023 £'000	NMA (Enterprises) 2023 £'000	Poppyscotland Group 2023 £'000	Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland 2023 £'000	Royal British Legion Trading 2023 £'000	Royal British Legion Poppy Lottery 2023 £'000	Royal British Legion Developments 2023 £'000	Remembrance Travel 2023 £'000
Turnover/incoming resources	5,071	2,927	5,105	250	9,985	-	-	-
(Expenditure) (including gains/(losses))	(4,928)	(3,111)	(8,163)	(43)	(8,668)	-	-	-
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>(184)</b>	<b>(3,058)</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Assets	24,528	687	8,954	2,655	4,126	-	7	47
Liabilities	(457)	(667)	(1,749)	(35)	(725)	-	(34)	(40)
<b>Net assets/(liabilities)</b>	<b>24,071</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7,205</b>	<b>2,620</b>	<b>3,401</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>7</b>

	The National Memorial Arboretum Company 2022 £'000	NMA (Enterprises) 2022 £'000	Poppyscotland Group 2022 £'000	Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland 2022 £'000	Royal British Legion Trading 2022 £'000	Royal British Legion Poppy Lottery 2022 £'000	Royal British Legion Developments 2022 £'000	Remembrance Travel 2022 £'000
Turnover/incoming resources	5,151	3,046	5,745	259	7,734	-	-	-
Expenditure	(4,191)	(2,717)	(8,127)	(562)	(9,446)	-	(2)	-
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>(2,382)</b>	<b>(303)</b>	<b>(1,712)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>-</b>
Assets	24,618	1,176	12,717	2,448	2,825	-	7	47
Liabilities	(690)	(972)	(2,454)	(35)	(741)	-	(34)	(40)
<b>Net assets/(liabilities)</b>	<b>23,928</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>10,263</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>2,084</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>7</b>

The principal activities of the subsidiaries are as follows:

*The National Memorial Arboretum Company Limited (Company number: 09297443, Charity number: 1043992)* – a charitable company operating an arboretum with memorial plots dedicated to those who suffered or lost their lives in the service of their country.

*NMA (Enterprises) Limited (Company number: 04259701)* – a trading company providing services to visitors to The National Memorial Arboretum Company Limited and providing services to NMA visitors. Its expenditure includes prior year profits paid under the Gift Aid scheme to The National Memorial Arboretum Company Limited of £250,000 (2022: £90,000).

*Poppyscotland (Earl Haig Fund Scotland) (Company number: SC194893, Charity number SC014096)* – a charitable company that supports those in need who have served in the Armed Forces and their dependants in Scotland. The charitable company has one subsidiary, Lady Haig Poppy Factory Limited, whose principal activity is the employment of disabled ex-service personnel to manufacture poppies and wreaths and to provide framing and printing services. The results above are those of the consolidated Poppyscotland Group. Lady Haig Poppy Factory Limited's trade and assets transferred to its parent Poppyscotland on 30 September 2023 and became dormant at that time.

*Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland (Company number: 585272, Charity number: CHY 7564)* – a charitable company that supports those in need who have served in the Armed Forces and their dependants in the Republic of Ireland.

*Royal British Legion Trading Limited (Company number: 04783730)* – a trading company that markets a range of goods and services to members and supporters of the RBL, and generates income from third parties through the use of corporate partnerships. Its expenditure includes prior year profits paid under the Gift Aid scheme to the RBL of £2.084 million (2022: £3.796 million).

*Royal British Legion Poppy Lottery Limited (Company number: 02522956, Charity number: 1145007)* – a charitable company that undertook the marketing and provision of a weekly lottery to members and supporters of the RBL until 31 March 2020 and is now dormant.

*Royal British Legion Developments Limited (Company number: 02906738)* – a trading company that develops or improves properties, principally those owned by the RBL and is currently inactive. There were no profits to pay to the RBL in 2023 or 2022.

*Remembrance Travel Limited (Company number: 04272358)* – a subsidiary that previously operated as a travel company delivering pilgrimages and associated travel activity until 1 October 2018 and is now dormant. On 13 March 2024, the directors of the dormant subsidiary Remembrance Travel voted to submit a voluntary action to strike off the company with Companies House.

*The Royal British Legion Family and Support Lottery Limited (Company number: 07758114) and Poppy Travel Limited (Company number: 07937118)* – dormant subsidiaries with no assets.



## 15 Information regarding employees and Trustees

	Total 2023	Total 2022
<b>Average number of employees (full-time equivalent) during the year</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>No.</b>
<b>Raising funds</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Charitable activities</b>		
Care services and Personnel Recovery Centres	644	558
Community welfare services	270	247
Membership services	58	50
Comradeship	-	1
Communication and campaigning	68	61
Remembrance and ceremonial	7	7
<b>Total charitable activities</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>924</b>
<b>Support and governance</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Total charity full-time equivalent staff</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>1,369</b>

### Subsidiaries average number of employees (full-time equivalent) during the year

Poppyscotland Group	88	98
National Memorial Arboretum Group	103	91
Royal British Legion Trading	17	16
<b>Total group full-time equivalent staff</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>1,544</b>

The group incurred costs of £5.1 million (2022: £3.56 million) on agency staff, which are not included in the staff costs below.

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Staff costs comprise:</b>				
Wages and salaries	54,507	47,268	49,123	42,566
National Insurance contributions	5,454	4,765	4,981	4,362
Pension costs	6,162	5,358	5,489	4,747
<b>Total staff costs</b>	<b>66,123</b>	<b>57,391</b>	<b>59,593</b>	<b>51,675</b>

The number of staff paid more than £60,000 during the year (salary plus taxable benefits excluding pension contributions) was:

	Group 2023 No.	Group 2022 No.	Charity 2023 No.	Charity 2022 No.
£60,000 - £69,999	32	26	30	25
£70,000 - £79,999	11	15	11	13
£80,000 - £89,999	11	7	10	6
£90,000 - £99,999	2	4	2	4
£100,000 - £109,999	1	2	1	2
£110,000 - £119,999	2	-	2	-
£120,000 - £129,999	2	1	2	1
£130,000 - £139,999	1	1	1	1
£140,000 - £149,999	-	-	-	-
£150,000 - £159,999	1	1	1	1

The key management personnel of the group comprise the members of the parent charity's Executive Board. The total remuneration (including pension contributions and employer's National Insurance contributions) paid in respect of key management personnel for the year was £1.01 million (2022: £0.938 million).

The RBL operates a transparent Pay Policy, which is communicated to all staff. Salary levels are regularly benchmarked against other comparable organisations across the private, public and third sectors. The compensation of RBL Directors is subject to annual review by a Governance Committee comprising five Trustees including the Chair and Vice Chair.

During the year, redundancy payments of £145,000 (2022: £451,000) and termination payments of £209,000 (2022: £83,000) were made across the group to 32 (2022: 49) individuals, which are included in the staff costs figures above.

During the year, the total expenses paid in respect of 20 (2022: 15) Board of Trustee members amounted to £66,000 (2022: £21,400). This principally represents travelling expenses for attending meetings and official engagements, and includes the costs of Trustees officiating at Remembrance tours. The RBL has purchased insurance to protect the charity from loss arising from neglect or default of its Trustees, and to indemnify the Trustees against the consequences of neglect or default on their part. No Trustee or person related or connected by business to them has received any remuneration from the RBL, nor have they entered into any other transaction or contract with the RBL during the year.

## 16 Staff pension funds

The Royal British Legion group pension arrangements comprise those of the RBL and its subsidiaries. The pension schemes are as follows:

1. Group Flexible Retirement Plan (GFRP)
2. The Earl Haig Fund Scotland – Stakeholder Scheme (EH Scheme)
3. The Lady Haig Poppy Factory – Stakeholder Scheme (LHPF Scheme)
4. The Royal British Legion Staff Pension Fund (DB Fund)
5. Stanplan F (Earl Haig Fund, 'EH Fund')

GFRP: This is the scheme available to all RBL group employees (including Poppyscotland from 1 October 2022) that is provided by Aviva. The GFRP scheme was introduced on 1 April 2010 and is a defined contribution scheme. The liability of the employer is limited to the contributions it makes, which amounted to £6.163 million (2022: £5.221 million) for the year, of which £548,081 (2022: £457,000) remained payable at the year end.

DB Fund: This is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme. The other employers participating in the scheme are Royal British Legion Industries and the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory. The DB Fund was closed to new members on 31 October 2002, and on 1 April 2010 was closed to accrual from the remaining members. The most recent formal actuarial valuation was carried out as at 1 April 2023 and showed the fund to be in surplus by £3.0 million. The results of the last valuation were updated to 30 September 2023 by a qualified actuary, and showed a surplus of £4.4 million. This surplus has not been recognised in these accounts as under the pension fund rules, there is no mechanism to refund employer contributions once they are paid in. In the year ended 30 September 2023, deficit contributions of £768,000 were paid into the fund, together with contributions of £222,000 related to administrative costs.

EH Fund: This is a defined benefit pension scheme available only to employees of Poppyscotland. The EH Fund was closed to new members on 31 October 2002 and on 31 March 2018 was closed to accrual from the remaining members. The last full actuarial valuation of the EH Fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022. As a result of the 2022 triennial valuation, the employer agreed to pay monthly installments of an annual deficit contribution of £124,000 per year from 1 October 2023 until 31 July 2035, increasing by 3% annually. The Poppyscotland pension scheme is included in restricted funds.

The RBL accounts for defined benefit schemes in accordance with section 28 of FRS 102 (Employee Benefits) and identifies each entity's share of the pension scheme assets and liabilities. A summary of the movement in pension assets and liabilities for the group's defined benefit pension funds is shown overleaf.

#### 16a Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities

	EH Fund 2023 £'000	DB Fund 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	EH Fund 2022 £'000	DB Fund 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Current service cost	-	-	-	-	-	-
Administration expenses	(163)	(560)	(723)	(119)	(504)	(623)
Net interest	(59)	12	(47)	(31)	(32)	(63)
<b>Amount charged to net incoming resources</b>	<b>(222)</b>	<b>(548)</b>	<b>(770)</b>	<b>(150)</b>	<b>(536)</b>	<b>(686)</b>
Actuarial gains/(losses)	54	4,548	4,602	1,864	20,450	22,314
Return on assets excluding amount included in net interest	(258)	(5,256)	(5,514)	(1,277)	(14,590)	(15,867)
Limit on recognition of assets less interest	-	266	266	-	(4,394)	(4,394)
<b>Amount recognised in other comprehensive income</b>	<b>(204)</b>	<b>(442)</b>	<b>(646)</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>2,053</b>
<b>Total (decrease)/increase in net funds</b>	<b>(426)</b>	<b>(990)</b>	<b>(1,416)</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1,367</b>

#### 16b Reconciliation to the Balance Sheet

	EH Fund 2023 £'000	DB Fund 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	EH Fund 2022 £'000	DB Fund 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Market value of assets	2,944	50,017	52,961	3,380	55,155	58,535
Present value of defined benefit obligation	(4,305)	(45,652)	(49,957)	(4,452)	(50,761)	(55,213)
Irrecoverable surplus	-	(4,365)	(4,365)	-	(4,394)	(4,394)
<b>Pension liability recognised in the Balance Sheet</b>	<b>(1,361)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,361)</b>	<b>(1,072)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,072)</b>

#### 16c Analysis of changes in the value of the fund liabilities over the year

	EH Fund 2023 £'000	DB Fund 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	EH Fund 2022 £'000	DB Fund 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Value of liabilities at start of year	(4,452)	(50,761)	(55,213)	(6,520)	(73,006)	(79,526)
Interest cost	(232)	(2,655)	(2,887)	(121)	(1,357)	(1,478)
Benefits paid	325	3,216	3,541	325	3,152	3,477
Actuarial gains/(losses)	54	4,548	4,602	1,864	20,450	22,314
<b>Value of liabilities at end of year</b>	<b>(4,305)</b>	<b>(45,652)</b>	<b>(49,957)</b>	<b>(4,452)</b>	<b>(50,761)</b>	<b>(55,213)</b>

#### 16d Analysis of changes in the value of the fund assets over the year

	EH Fund 2023 £'000	DB Fund 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	EH Fund 2022 £'000	DB Fund 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Market value of assets at start of year	3,380	55,155	58,535	4,877	71,086	75,963
Return on assets excluding amount included in net interest	(258)	(5,256)	(5,514)	(1,277)	(14,590)	(15,867)
Administration expenses	(163)	(560)	(723)	(119)	(504)	(623)
Employer contributions	137	990	1,127	134	990	1,124
Interest income	173	2,904	3,077	90	1,325	1,415
Benefits paid	(325)	(3,216)	(3,541)	(325)	(3,152)	(3,477)
<b>Market value of assets at end of year</b>	<b>2,944</b>	<b>50,017</b>	<b>52,961</b>	<b>3,380</b>	<b>55,155</b>	<b>58,535</b>

**16e Asset classes**

	<b>DB Fund 2023</b>		DB Fund 2022	
	<b>Market Value £'000</b>	<b>% of total fund assets</b>	Market Value £'000	% of total fund assets
Equities	<b>4,744</b>	<b>9%</b>	15,959	29%
Bonds	<b>14,422</b>	<b>29%</b>	7,475	14%
LDI	<b>15,161</b>	<b>30%</b>	10,126	18%
Cash	<b>775</b>	<b>2%</b>	658	1%
Annuities	<b>991</b>	<b>2%</b>	1,561	3%
Other assets	<b>13,924</b>	<b>28%</b>	19,376	34%
<b>Total fund assets</b>	<b>50,017</b>		<b>55,155</b>	
<b>The actual return on assets over the year was</b>	<b>(2,352)</b>		<b>(12,818)</b>	

	<b>EH Fund 2023</b>		EH Fund 2022	
	<b>Market Value £'000</b>	<b>% of total fund assets</b>	Market Value £'000	% of total fund assets
Equities	<b>614</b>	<b>21%</b>	1,570	46%
Cash	<b>139</b>	<b>5%</b>	174	5%
Annuities	<b>216</b>	<b>7%</b>	266	8%
Other assets	<b>1,975</b>	<b>67%</b>	1,370	41%
<b>Total fund assets</b>	<b>2,944</b>		<b>3,380</b>	
<b>The actual return on assets over the year was</b>	<b>(85)</b>		<b>(1,187)</b>	

The RBL's assets have been taken as the proportion of the total fund assets that the RBL's liability valuation bears to the total fund's liability valuation.

The assets are invested in a diversified portfolio.

During 2024, contributions of £174,004 are expected to be paid into the EH Fund, inclusive of deficit reduction payments. Given the surplus position on the DB Fund, no further payments into the fund will be required at this time.



## 16f Actuarial assumptions

	2023 % p.a.		2022 % p.a.	
<b>Financial assumptions</b>	<b>EH Fund</b>	<b>DB Fund</b>	<b>EH Fund</b>	<b>DB Fund</b>
Discount rate	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4
Retail price index inflation	3.55	3.55	3.7	3.7
Consumer price index inflation	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.0
Salary increases	-	3.9	4.0	4.0
Rate of increases of pensions in payment:				
Capped at 5% or RPI if less	-	3.4	-	3.6
Capped at 5% or CPI if less	3.6	-	3.6	3.6
Capped at 3% or CPI if less	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4
Capped at 2.5% or CPI if less	2.1	-	2.3	2.3
Rate of increase for deferred pensioners	2.5	2.9	2.5	3.0

### Mortality assumptions – EH Fund

	2023		2022	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Life expectancies at age 60</b>				
Current pensioner now aged 60	24.4 years	27.2 years	24.9 years	27.7 years
Future pensioner now aged 40	25.9 years	28.7 years	26.4 years	29.2 years

### Mortality assumptions – DB Fund

	2023		2022	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Life expectancies at age 60</b>				
Current pensioner now aged 60	25.3 years	28.1 years	25.9 years	28.6 years
Future pensioner now aged 40	26.8 years	29.6 years	27.4 years	30.1 years

## 17 Group intangible fixed assets

	Software, Databases and Licences £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Total Group £'000
<b>At cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 October 2022	5,493	-	5,493
At 30 September 2023	5,493	-	5,493
<b>Accumulated amortisation</b>			
At 1 October 2022	(4,291)	-	(4,291)
Charge for the year	(523)	-	(523)
At 30 September 2023	(4,814)	-	(4,814)
<b>Net book value at 30 September 2023</b>	679	-	679
Net book value at 30 September 2022	1,202	-	1,202

**17a Charity intangible fixed assets**

	Software, Databases and Licences £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Total Charity £'000
<b>At cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 October 2022	5,367	-	<b>5,367</b>
At 30 September 2023	5,367		<b>5,367</b>
<b>Accumulated amortisation</b>			
At 1 October 2022	(4,247)	-	<b>(4,247)</b>
Charge for the year	(498)	-	<b>(498)</b>
At 30 September 2023	<b>(4,745)</b>	-	<b>(4,745)</b>
			-
<b>Net book value at 30 September 2023</b>	<b>622</b>	-	<b>622</b>
Net book value at 30 September 2022	1,120	-	1,120

**18 Group tangible fixed assets including functional property**

	Freehold homes £'000	Other freehold £'000	Leasehold property and leasehold improvements £'000	Plant, machinery and equipment £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Total Group £'000
<b>At cost or valuation</b>						
At 1 October 2022	45,172	34,483	30,749	8,695	2,442	<b>121,541</b>
Additions	-	-	213	707	3,787	<b>4,707</b>
Transfers	967	-	228	4,314	(5,509)	-
Disposals	-	-	(13)	(1,399)	-	<b>(1,412)</b>
At 30 September 2023	<b>46,139</b>	<b>34,483</b>	<b>31,177</b>	<b>12,317</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>124,836</b>
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 October 2022	(14,236)	(8,492)	(10,624)	(6,616)	-	<b>(39,968)</b>
Charge for the year	(823)	(748)	(770)	(1,025)	-	<b>(3,366)</b>
Disposals	-	-	13	1,399	-	<b>1,412</b>
At 30 September 2023	<b>(15,059)</b>	<b>(9,240)</b>	<b>(11,381)</b>	<b>(6,242)</b>	-	<b>(41,922)</b>
Net book value at 30 September 2023	<b>31,080</b>	<b>25,243</b>	<b>19,796</b>	<b>6,075</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>82,914</b>
Net book value at 30 September 2022	30,936	25,991	20,125	2,079	2,442	81,573

18a Charity tangible fixed assets including functional property						
	Freehold homes	Other freehold	Leasehold property and leasehold improvements	Plant, machinery and equipment	Assets under construction	Total Charity
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>At cost or valuation</b>						
At 1 October 2022	45,172	29,622	6,485	7,776	2,106	91,161
Additions	-	-	-	-	3,466	3,466
Transfers	967	-	-	4,314	(5,281)	-
Disposals	-	-	-	(1,399)	-	(1,399)
At 30 September 2023	46,139	29,622	6,485	10,691	291	93,228
<b>Accumulated depreciation</b>						
At 1 October 2022	(14,236)	(7,917)	(6,044)	(6,116)	-	(34,313)
Charge for the year	(823)	(655)	(241)	(918)	-	(2,637)
Disposals	-	-	-	1,399	-	1,399
At 30 September 2023	(15,059)	(8,572)	(6,285)	(5,635)	-	(35,551)
<b>Net book value at 30 September 2023</b>	<b>31,080</b>	<b>21,050</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>5,056</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>57,677</b>
Net book value at 30 September 2022	30,936	21,705	441	1,660	2,106	56,848

19 Investments				
	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
Market value at 1 October	172,317	182,213	164,143	170,960
Net (disposals)/additions	(1,078)	1,086	2,203	2,313
Investment gain/(loss) on revaluation	1,705	(10,982)	967	(9,131)
<b>Market value at 30 September</b>	<b>172,944</b>	<b>172,317</b>	<b>167,313</b>	<b>164,143</b>
The asset distribution of the investment portfolio at 30 September is presented below.				
	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
Equities:				
UK	7,637	14,468	6,877	13,461
Overseas	85,763	72,575	84,071	70,719
<b>Total equities</b>	<b>93,400</b>	<b>87,043</b>	<b>90,948</b>	<b>84,180</b>
Bonds:				
UK	16,776	14,302	14,553	10,906
Overseas	5,624	5,683	5,331	5,327
<b>Total bonds</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>19,985</b>	<b>19,884</b>	<b>16,233</b>
Cash:				
UK	1,924	3,483	1,689	3,035
Overseas	-	-	-	-
<b>Total cash</b>	<b>1,924</b>	<b>3,483</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>3,035</b>
Hedge funds – UK	2,329	2,522	2,329	2,383
Property	10,113	12,443	10,041	12,352
Private equity	10,412	7,153	10,412	7,153
Commodities	9,532	9,970	9,432	9,781
Portfolio funds:				
UK	7,465	11,707	7,291	11,707
Overseas	-	-	-	-
<b>Total portfolio funds</b>	<b>7,465</b>	<b>11,707</b>	<b>7,291</b>	<b>11,707</b>
Other:				
UK	8,173	8,959	8,155	8,789
Overseas	7,196	9,052	7,132	8,530
<b>Total other</b>	<b>15,369</b>	<b>18,011</b>	<b>15,287</b>	<b>17,319</b>
<b>Total investments</b>	<b>172,944</b>	<b>172,317</b>	<b>167,313</b>	<b>164,143</b>

£151.877 million of the investments are managed by Cazenove Capital Management Limited (2022: £147.525 million). The strategy is to maintain the real value of assets and target an investment return of CPI plus 3%. The investments are held at market value, normally using prices obtained from an independent pricing source. Funds and unit trusts are generally priced on a net asset value basis. Structured products are valued on a market to market basis. Unquoted investments are valued in accordance with the International Private Equity and Venture Capital valuation guidelines or held at cost impairment. Investments where a price is not readily available, that are held in an execution-only portfolio, will be valued at the last publicly available price.

Other investments includes investments held by branches, and balances relating to the Arthur Atock Memorial Trust and Devon Community Trust.



## 20 Group & Charity investment properties

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000
Market value at 1 October	62,421	65,533
Disposal proceeds	(1,944)	(8,630)
Net gain on disposal from opening market value	754	2,816
Net gain on revaluation of investment properties	4,325	2,702
<b>Market value at 30 September</b>	<b>65,556</b>	<b>62,421</b>

Investment properties primarily comprise 259 properties (2022: 275 properties), which are owned by the RBL but are let to independent commercial operations, primarily affiliated social clubs. The RBL's valuation methodology is to revalue its investment properties on a five-year rolling basis, with 20% being revalued each year. For the year ended 30 September 2023, 66 properties were revalued (2022: 57 properties) and a revaluation gain of £4.3 million (2022: £2.70 million) was recognised in the accounts. This revaluation was completed by qualified surveyors in our internal Estates team, on the basis of open market value for existing use. The remaining 80% of investment properties are reviewed internally by a qualified surveyor for any material changes on an annual basis, and as a result of this exercise, further revaluation losses totalling £nil (2022: £nil) have been recognised.

In 2017, following receipt of legal advice, a revaluation loss of £3.240 million was recognised on the basis of uncertainty about whether the RBL had a beneficial interest in a number of properties. During 2023, none of these properties (2022: nil) have transferred to the full corporate trusteeship of the RBL, and as a result, a revaluation gain of £nil (2022: £nil) has been recognised in respect of these properties.

## 21 Programme-related investments

	Group & Charity 2023 £'000	Group & Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Loans to external organisations</b>		
Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation	101	245
RBL Industries Limited	1,840	2,022
<b>Other schemes unrestricted</b>		
Loans for property repairs (PRL)	2,987	3,262
<b>Total programme-related investments</b>	<b>4,928</b>	<b>5,529</b>

**21a Programme-related investments movement during the year**

	<b>Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation £'000</b>	<b>RBL Industries Limited £'000</b>	<b>PRL loans £'000</b>	<b>Total Group &amp; Charity £'000</b>
Opening balance at 1 October	245	2,022	3,262	<b>5,529</b>
Interest	7	88	-	<b>95</b>
Repayments and security deposits	(151)	(270)	(275)	<b>(696)</b>
<b>Closing balance at 30 September</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>2,987</b>	<b>4,928</b>

The RBL has provided a number of loans in furtherance of its charitable objectives as follows:

Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation – secured loan repayable over 10 years issued towards the development costs of a veterans' housing centre. An interest rate of 4% is applied to the principal issued on the anniversary of the loan agreement (17 September 2013).

RBL Industries Limited – a secured loan repayable over 10 years issued towards the development of Phase 2B of the RBL Centenary Village. An interest rate of 0.5% above the Bank of England base rate is applied on the daily outstanding balance.

Property Repair Loans – interest-free secured loans to beneficiaries living in their own homes to provide housing improvements. The majority are lifetime loans as they are repayable on the sale of property. The minimum amount for a loan is £2,000 and the maximum allowed is £25,000. The RBL ceased issuing new loans in 2013.

**22 Debtors**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
Trade debtors	<b>1,717</b>	2,084	<b>1,460</b>	1,911
Amounts due from consolidated entities	-	-	<b>89</b>	783
Other debtors	<b>1,733</b>	2,202	<b>1,486</b>	1,250
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>5,954</b>	6,622	<b>5,046</b>	6,138
<b>Total debtors</b>	<b>9,404</b>	10,908	<b>8,081</b>	10,082

**23 Cash at hand and in bank and short-term deposits**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Cash held centrally</b>				
Short-term deposits	<b>20,241</b>	7,261	<b>18,474</b>	5,976
Cash at hand and in bank	<b>14,080</b>	54,847	<b>10,683</b>	50,192
	<b>34,321</b>	62,108	<b>29,157</b>	56,168
<b>Cash held by branches</b>	<b>9,454</b>	10,305	<b>9,454</b>	10,305
<b>Total cash</b>	<b>43,775</b>	72,413	<b>38,611</b>	66,473

## 24 Creditors

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Creditors falling due within one year</b>				
Trade creditors	3,182	2,363	2,682	1,809
Amounts due to consolidated entities	-	-	1,300	68
Grant commitments (see note 25)	8,650	6,040	8,650	6,040
Accruals	7,800	8,369	7,166	7,596
Deferred income (see note 24a)	2,379	2,698	2,164	2,499
Other creditors	2,523	2,125	2,055	1,915
Hire Purchase commitments due within one year	15	21	-	-
<b>Total creditors falling due within one year</b>	<b>24,549</b>	<b>21,616</b>	<b>24,017</b>	<b>19,927</b>

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Creditors falling due after more than one year</b>				
External grant commitments (see note 25):				
Due within two to five years	4,276	5,876	4,276	5,876
Hire Purchase commitments				
Due within two to five years	-	15	-	-
<b>Total creditors falling due after more than one year</b>	<b>4,276</b>	<b>5,891</b>	<b>4,276</b>	<b>5,876</b>

## 24a Deferred income movement during the year

	Group 2023 £'000	Group 2022 £'000	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
Opening balance at 1 October	2,698	3,288	2,499	3,021
Deferred income released in the year	(2,698)	(3,288)	(2,499)	(3,021)
Income deferred in the year	2,379	2,698	2,164	2,499
Closing balance at 30 September	<b>2,379</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>2,164</b>	<b>2,499</b>

Deferred income primarily represents membership income received before the year end, in advance of renewals starting on or after 1 October 2023, as well as Poppy Lottery and Raffle entries received in advance of the draw date, and care home fees paid in advance of the dates of the care provision it relates to.

## 25 Group & Charity grant commitments

	Personnel Recovery Centres 2023 £'000	Combat Stress 2023 £'000	Other 2023 £'000	Group & Charity Total 2023 £'000
Opening balance at 1 October 2022	963	6,151	4,802	<b>11,916</b>
Grants awarded	-	2,000	2,904	<b>4,904</b>
Unwinding of discount	-	53	35	<b>88</b>
Payments during the year	-	(2,000)	(1,982)	<b>(3,982)</b>
Closing balance at 30 September 2023	<b>963</b>	<b>6,204</b>	<b>5,759</b>	<b>12,926</b>

**26 Provisions for liabilities**

	<b>Group 2023 £'000</b>	Group 2022 £'000	<b>Charity 2023 £'000</b>	Charity 2022 £'000
Opening balance at 1 October	<b>2,166</b>	1,799	<b>1,578</b>	1,755
Provisions made in the year	<b>50</b>	740	<b>50</b>	152
Provisions released in the year	<b>(350)</b>	(373)	<b>(350)</b>	(329)
Closing balance at 30 September	<b>1,866</b>	2,166	<b>1,278</b>	1,578

Charity provisions for liabilities includes estimated future costs of dilapidations obligations arising from land and building operating lease contracts where the RBL is the lessee and the contract requires the RBL to pay such costs at the end of the lease period. Current lease obligations expire no later than 2025.

Group provisions for liabilities also includes a provision for VAT payable to HMRC of £588,000 to cover any potential liability relating to the VAT status of the refurbishment of the Lady Haig Poppy Factory that was funded by Earl Haig Fund Scotland. Further details are provided in the 2021 Earl Haig Fund Scotland statutory annual accounts.

**27 Group operating lease commitments**

	<b>Land and buildings 2023 £'000</b>	<b>Vehicles and equipment 2023 £'000</b>	Land and buildings 2022 £'000	Vehicles and equipment 2022 £'000
At 30 September, the group had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:				
Within one year	<b>697</b>	-	1,132	121
Within one to five years	<b>593</b>	-	1,322	53
Over five years	<b>756</b>	-	1,333	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,046</b>	-	<b>3,787</b>	<b>174</b>

**27a Charity operating lease commitments**

	<b>Land and buildings 2023 £'000</b>	<b>Vehicles and equipment 2023 £'000</b>	Land and buildings 2022 £'000	Vehicles and equipment 2022 £'000
At 30 September, the charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:				
Within one year	<b>677</b>	-	1,132	96
Within one to five years	<b>523</b>	-	1,322	45
Over five years	<b>756</b>	-	1,333	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,956</b>	-	<b>3,787</b>	<b>141</b>



## 28 Group unrestricted funds

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2022 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2023 £'000
Central benevolent fund	90,932	109,521	(120,993)	1,747	(2,482)	<b>78,725</b>
Area trust funds	16,110	-	(11,482)	-	1,810	<b>6,438</b>
Pension reserve	-	-	(548)	(442)	990	-
Subsidiaries' funds	2,064	9,985	(6,584)	-	(2,084)	<b>3,381</b>
<b>Available reserves</b>	<b>109,106</b>	<b>119,506</b>	<b>(139,607)</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>(1,766)</b>	<b>88,544</b>
General fund	4,483	4,149	(5,296)	-	-	<b>3,336</b>
Branch, county, district and Women's Section funds	32,031	4,820	(4,043)	75	(2,531)	<b>30,352</b>
WS Invictus Games	-	-	(131)	-	250	<b>119</b>
Functional fixed asset reserve	57,968	-	(3,135)	-	3,466	<b>58,299</b>
Programme-related investment reserve	5,529	95	-	-	(696)	<b>4,928</b>
<b>Total group unrestricted funds</b>	<b>209,117</b>	<b>128,570</b>	<b>(152,212)</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>(1,277)</b>	<b>185,578</b>

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2021 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2022 £'000
Central benevolent fund	85,467	116,806	(104,026)	(7,695)	380	90,932
Area trust funds	20,085	-	(5,297)	-	1,322	16,110
Pension reserve	(1,920)	-	(536)	1,466	990	-
Subsidiaries' funds	3,778	7,734	(5,652)	-	(3,796)	2,064
<b>Available reserves</b>	<b>107,410</b>	<b>124,540</b>	<b>(115,511)</b>	<b>(6,229)</b>	<b>(1,104)</b>	<b>109,106</b>
General fund	4,841	4,077	(4,435)	-	-	4,483
Branch, county, district and Women's Section funds	32,293	6,961	(5,325)	(237)	(1,661)	32,031
Functional fixed asset reserve	59,637	-	(3,322)	-	1,653	57,968
Programme-related investment reserve	4,009	35	-	-	1,485	5,529
<b>Total group unrestricted funds</b>	<b>208,190</b>	<b>135,613</b>	<b>(128,593)</b>	<b>(6,466)</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>209,117</b>

The Central benevolent fund incorporates the core activities of the RBL, such as operating residential care homes, giving grants, providing resettlement training, giving pension claims advice, and acting as the custodian of Remembrance. The proceeds from the annual Poppy Appeal collection are allocated to this fund.

The Area trust funds are benevolent funds that have been designated for use in a particular geographical area.

The Pension reserve is a specific allocation of unrestricted funds in relation to the Royal British Legion Staff Pension Fund.

Subsidiaries' funds represents unrestricted funds held in subsidiaries.

Taken together, the above four lines represent the total unrestricted reserves of the RBL, which are available for immediate use at the discretion of the Trustees.

The General fund is used to support the central administration of the membership of the RBL.

Branch, county, district and Women's Section funds represent those funds held by, or on behalf of, the various RBL membership formations.

The Functional fixed asset reserve represents the value of the RBL's functional fixed asset portfolio (such as residential care homes), used by the charity in the delivery of its charitable objectives.

The Programme-related investment reserve represents the value of the programme-related investments used by the charity in the delivery of its charitable objectives.

28a Charity unrestricted funds						
	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2022 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains / (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2023 £'000
Central benevolent fund	90,932	111,605	(124,019)	1,747	(1,540)	78,725
Area trust funds	16,110	-	(11,482)	-	1,810	6,438
Pension reserve	-	-	(548)	(442)	990	-
<b>Available reserves</b>	<b>107,042</b>	<b>111,605</b>	<b>(136,049)</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>85,163</b>
General fund	4,483	4,149	(5,296)	-	-	3,336
Branch, county, district and Women's Section funds	32,031	4,820	(4,043)	75	(2,531)	30,352
WS Invictus Games	-	-	(131)	-	250	119
Functional fixed asset reserve	57,968	-	(3,135)	-	3,466	58,299
Programme-related investment reserve	5,529	95	-	-	(696)	4,928
<b>Total charity unrestricted funds</b>	<b>207,053</b>	<b>120,669</b>	<b>(148,654)</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>182,197</b>

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2021 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2022 £'000
Central benevolent fund	85,467	120,602	(106,986)	(7,695)	(456)	90,932
Area trust funds	20,085	-	(5,297)	-	1,322	16,110
Pension reserve	(1,920)	-	(536)	1,466	990	-
<b>Available reserves</b>	<b>103,632</b>	<b>120,602</b>	<b>(112,819)</b>	<b>(6,229)</b>	<b>1,856</b>	<b>107,042</b>
General fund	4,841	4,077	(4,435)	-	-	4,483
Branch, county, district and Women's Section funds	32,293	6,961	(5,325)	(237)	(1,661)	32,031
Functional fixed asset reserve	59,637	-	(3,322)	-	1,653	57,968
Programme-related investment reserve	4,009	35	-	-	1,485	5,529
<b>Total charity unrestricted funds</b>	<b>204,412</b>	<b>131,675</b>	<b>(125,901)</b>	<b>(6,466)</b>	<b>3,333</b>	<b>207,053</b>

## 29 Group restricted funds

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2022 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2023 £'000
Investment property reserve	62,421	-	-	5,079	(1,944)	<b>65,556</b>
Income and sales proceeds from property held in corporate trusteeship	42,078	2,578	(4,863)	73	958	<b>40,824</b>
Grants for specific purposes	2,642	3,702	(4,517)	-	(530)	<b>1,297</b>
Donor-restricted legacies and donations	11,305	1,316	(1,015)	22	(214)	<b>11,414</b>
Branch and county funds	6,713	449	(1,290)	(757)	-	<b>5,115</b>
Charity Commission schemes	2,361	50	-	22	-	<b>2,433</b>
Homes' residents' amenity funds	1,814	261	(628)	-	(19)	<b>1,428</b>
The Arthur Atock Memorial Trust	1,480	47	(124)	149	-	<b>1,552</b>
British Korean Veterans (1981) Relief Fund	132	2	-	1	-	<b>135</b>
Samsung British Korean Veterans Scholarship Fund	303	8	-	(82)	-	<b>229</b>
Permanent endowments	933	1	-	103	-	<b>1,037</b>
<b>Total charity restricted funds</b>	<b>132,182</b>	<b>8,414</b>	<b>(12,437)</b>	<b>4,610</b>	<b>(1,749)</b>	<b>131,020</b>
Poppyscotland Group	11,335	4,579	(7,734)	(3)	389	<b>8,566</b>
Poppyscotland pension provision	(1,072)	-	(222)	(204)	137	<b>(1,361)</b>
National Memorial Arboretum Group	24,132	5,248	(7,789)	-	2,500	<b>24,091</b>
Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland	2,413	250	(234)	191	-	<b>2,620</b>
<b>Total group restricted funds</b>	<b>168,990</b>	<b>18,491</b>	<b>(28,416)</b>	<b>4,594</b>	<b>1,277</b>	<b>164,936</b>

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2021 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2022 £'000
Investment property reserve	65,533	-	-	5,518	(8,630)	62,421
Income and sales proceeds from property held in corporate trusteeship	39,679	2,634	(6,043)	(87)	5,895	42,078
Grants for specific purposes	2,610	1,332	(1,300)	-	-	2,642
Donor-restricted legacies and donations	11,728	1,150	(799)	(79)	(695)	11,305
Branch and county funds	5,999	1,831	(451)	(666)	-	6,713
Charity Commission schemes	2,421	49	-	(109)	-	2,361
Homes' residents' amenity funds	1,925	201	(409)	-	97	1,814
The Arthur Atock Memorial Trust	1,523	86	(92)	(37)	-	1,480
British Korean Veterans (1981) Relief Fund	142	1	(1)	(10)	-	132
Samsung British Korean Veterans Scholarship Fund	339	7	-	(43)	-	303
Permanent endowments	975	-	-	(42)	-	933
<b>Total charity restricted funds</b>	<b>132,874</b>	<b>7,291</b>	<b>(9,095)</b>	<b>4,445</b>	<b>(3,333)</b>	<b>132,182</b>
Poppyscotland Group	14,288	5,085	(6,985)	(1,579)	526	11,335
Poppyscotland pension provision	(1,643)	-	(150)	587	134	(1,072)
National Memorial Arboretum Group	23,371	5,279	(6,818)	-	2,300	24,132
Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland	2,716	259	(213)	(349)	-	2,413
<b>Total group restricted funds</b>	<b>171,606</b>	<b>17,914</b>	<b>(23,261)</b>	<b>3,104</b>	<b>(373)</b>	<b>168,990</b>

Restricted funds represent grants, donations, legacies and property that are given by the donor for specific purposes and that must be used for that purpose. All restricted funds are held within the Benevolent fund. Restricted funds include permanent endowment funds that are not material and are not therefore shown separately on the face of the Balance Sheet.

The investment property reserve represents the estimated market value of £65.556 million (2022: £62.421 million), representing a portfolio of 259 properties (2022: 275 properties) owned by the RBL and, in most cases, occupied by social clubs licensed by the RBL to use its name. Many of these properties are held under trust deeds, which provide that, if they are sold, the proceeds must be applied in accordance with the terms of the original trust deeds. In most cases, the beneficiaries of such deeds will also be the beneficiaries of the Royal British Legion, but in some cases the relevant deed may limit support in the first instance to ex-serving personnel in a defined geographical area.

As a result, income from these properties is held as restricted funds pending agreement with the Charity Commission on how the restrictions contained within the trust deeds can be widened to best serve the RBL's beneficiaries, at which point the funds are transferred to other reserves as appropriate. The value of these reserves at 30 September 2023 was £41.226 million (2022: £42.078 million), which includes both investment income and sales proceeds.

### 29a Charity restricted funds

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2022 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2023 £'000
Investment property reserve	62,421	-	-	5,079	(1,944)	<b>65,556</b>
Income and sales proceeds from property held in corporate trusteeship	42,078	2,578	(4,863)	73	958	<b>40,824</b>
Grants for specific purposes	2,642	3,702	(4,517)	-	(530)	<b>1,297</b>
Donor-restricted legacies and donations	11,305	1,316	(1,015)	22	(214)	<b>11,414</b>
Branch and county funds	6,713	449	(1,290)	(757)	-	<b>5,115</b>
Charity Commission schemes	2,361	50	-	22	-	<b>2,433</b>
Homes' residents' amenity funds	1,814	261	(628)	-	(19)	<b>1,428</b>
The Arthur Atock Memorial Trust	1,480	47	(124)	149	-	<b>1,552</b>
British Korean Veterans (1981) Relief Fund	132	2	-	1	-	<b>135</b>
Samsung British Korean Veterans Scholarship Fund	303	8	-	(82)	-	<b>229</b>
Permanent endowments	933	1	-	103	-	<b>1,037</b>
<b>Total charity restricted funds</b>	<b>132,182</b>	<b>8,414</b>	<b>(12,437)</b>	<b>4,610</b>	<b>(1,749)</b>	<b>131,020</b>

	Opening Balance 1 Oct 2021 £'000	Incoming resources £'000	Resources expended £'000	Gains/ (losses) £'000	Transfers £'000	Closing Balance 30 Sept 2022 £'000
Investment property reserve	65,533	-	-	5,518	(8,630)	62,421
Income and sales proceeds from property held in corporate trusteeship	39,679	2,634	(6,043)	(87)	5,895	42,078
Grants for specific purposes	2,610	1,332	(1,300)	-	-	2,642
Donor-restricted legacies and donations	11,728	1,150	(799)	(79)	(695)	11,305
Branch and county funds	5,999	1,831	(451)	(666)	-	6,713
Charity Commission schemes	2,421	49	-	(109)	-	2,361
Homes' residents' amenity funds	1,925	201	(409)	-	97	1,814
The Arthur Atock Memorial Trust	1,523	86	(92)	(37)	-	1,480
British Korean Veterans (1981) Relief Fund	142	1	(1)	(10)	-	132
Samsung British Korean Veterans Scholarship Fund	399	7	-	(43)	-	303
Permanent endowments	975	-	-	(42)	-	933
<b>Total charity restricted funds</b>	<b>132,874</b>	<b>7,291</b>	<b>(9,095)</b>	<b>4,445</b>	<b>(3,333)</b>	<b>132,182</b>

### 30 Transfers between restricted and unrestricted funds

During the year, the group made net transfers of £1.277 million from unrestricted to restricted reserves (2022: £0.333 million transferred from restricted to unrestricted reserves). The most significant transfers are described below.

The RBL carried out further work in respect of the income and sale proceeds held from properties in corporate trusteeship. In its role as corporate trustee, the RBL made use of provisos on 8 trusts (2022: 6 trusts), resulting in the release of £1.8 million (2022: £1.322 million) from restricted into unrestricted funds. The RBL has opted to designate these funds for welfare activity, and they are included within Area trust funds at note 28 above.

An amount of £2.5 million (2022: £2.3 million) was transferred from unrestricted to restricted funds in respect of grant funding provided by the charity to the National Memorial Arboretum. Similarly, a transfer of £526,000 (2022: £660,000) was made from unrestricted to restricted funds in respect of funding provided by the charity to Poppyscotland.

### 31 Analysis of group net assets between funds

	Unrestricted 2023 £'000	Restricted 2023 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted 2022 £'000	Restricted 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
<b>Fund balances are represented by:</b>						
Intangible and tangible assets	58,299	25,294	83,593	57,968	24,807	82,775
Investments	115,945	127,483	243,428	115,886	124,381	240,267
Current assets	40,115	15,430	55,545	62,449	23,361	85,810
Current and non-current liabilities	(28,781)	(1,910)	(30,691)	(27,186)	(2,487)	(29,673)
Defined benefit pension liability	-	(1,361)	(1,361)	-	(1,072)	(1,072)
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>185,578</b>	<b>164,936</b>	<b>350,514</b>	<b>209,117</b>	<b>168,990</b>	<b>378,107</b>

### 32 Events after the reporting period

On 4 January 2024, Gift Aid totalling £3.402 million relating to the 2023 profits of Royal British Legion Trading was paid to the charity; consequently, no tax is payable by this subsidiary in respect of the year ended 30 September 2023.

On 20 December 2023, Gift Aid totalling £20,000 relating to the 2023 profits of NMA (Enterprises) was paid to the National Memorial Arboretum Company; consequently, no tax is payable by this subsidiary in respect of the year ended 30 September 2023.

On 13 March 2024, the directors of the dormant subsidiary Remembrance Travel voted to submit a voluntary action to strike off the company with Companies House. Prior to doing so, Shareholder Resolutions were passed by the RBL on 14 December 2023 and 6 February 2024, to redesignate the Redeemable Preference shares to Ordinary share capital and undertake a Capital Reduction of Ordinary share capital respectively. This was followed by Remembrance Travel declaring a dividend to the RBL on 21 February 2024 in order to reduce the assets held in Remembrance Travel at application to strike off to £1 share capital only.

### 33 Related party transactions

During the year ended 30 September 2023, the following transactions have taken place between the charity and other members of the RBL group:

- Grant funding of £2.5 million was provided by the charity to The National Memorial Arboretum Company (2022: £2.3 million).
- The charity received donations of profits from Royal British Legion Trading of £2.084 million (2022: £3.796 million). Royal British Legion Developments and Remembrance Travel had no profits to pay to the charity in 2023 (2022: nil).
- Grant funding of £526,000 was provided by the charity to the Poppyscotland Group (2022: £660,000).
- The charity purchased goods and services valued at £248,000 from NMA (Enterprises) (2022: £362,000).
- NMA (Enterprises) purchased goods and services valued at £72,000 from Royal British Legion Trading (2022: £235,000).



In addition, the following balances were outstanding between the charity and other members of the RBL group at 30 September 2023:

	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Amounts receivable from consolidated entities</b>		
The National Memorial Arboretum Company	2	12
Royal British Legion Developments	32	32
Royal British Legion Trading	24	332
Royal British Legion Republic of Ireland	8	-
Poppyscotland Group	23	407
<b>Total amounts receivable from consolidated entities</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>783</b>
	Charity 2023 £'000	Charity 2022 £'000
<b>Amounts payable to consolidated entities</b>		
Royal British Legion Trading	1,237	-
NMA (Enterprises)	63	68
<b>Total amounts payable to consolidated entities</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>68</b>

The Royal British Legion is a member organisation of the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League (RCEL). One of the RBL's Trustees holds a position within the RCEL as detailed below. The RCEL shares office space and certain services with the RBL, which had an estimated value of £48,000 during the year (2022: £46,000). The RCEL does not make payments to the RBL for these services.

A grant of £480,000 for a two-year period was awarded on 24 September 2021 as an extension of a prior five-year grant. The charity recognised a discount credit to grant expenditure of £7,000 during 2023 (2022: £14,000) and holds a grant creditor of £240,000 owed to RCEL at 30 September 2023 (2022: £473,000) in respect of this funding.

Organisation	Related party	Position at the RBL	Position at related party organisation
Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League	Jason Coward	National Chair	Trustee





Registered address: Royal British Legion, Haig House, 199 Borough High Street, London SE1 1AA  
Registered Charity Number: 219279