



**THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION (SCOTLAND)  
DUNBAR & DISTRICT BRANCH**

**MINUTES OF THE BRANCH A.G.M.  
HELD ON SUNDAY THE 13TH DECEMBER 2020 AT 1100 HRS.**

SECRETARIAL NOTE: In compliance with social distancing guidelines, those present were each provided with written copies of all remarks, reports and previous minutes. No reports were read aloud. All reports and remarks are appended to this record.

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The President, Mr. David Bolton opened the meeting and welcomed the members present, he then asked for a moments silence when Binyan's lines were read, he then handed over to the Chairman.

The Chairman then asked for the appointment of scrutineers, this was duly done and Mrs Linda Gilhooly and Mr. Steven Smith were appointed. The Chairman then asked for a count of members present and the count was returned as 16.

Chairman's Opening Remarks – see appendix 1.

The Chairman then asked for the previous A.G.M minutes to be read, this was duly done and the minutes were accepted for adoption on the proposal of Mr. Michael Kaszuba, and seconded by Mr. Steven Smith.

Treasurers Report – see appendix 2

No questions were asked of the Treasurer.

The Treasurer's report was duly accepted, Proposer Duncan Laing, Seconder Kimberley Tolputt.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer

Pensions and Welfare Report – see appendix 3

The President thanked Duncan, Iain and Kimberley.

Pipe Band Report – see appendix 4

Pipe band thanked by Chairman

The meeting was then suspended for the social club A.G.M.  
See Social Club AGM Minutes, separate document.

The branch A.G.M. reconvened.

The President then declared all offices vacant.

Nominations for Executive and Committee – see appendix 5

Nominations for Area Delegates Robert Gilbertson and Steven Smith had volunteered to remain in post as Area Delegates. These positions were unanimously agreed.

AOB

1. See appendix 6
2. The treasurer proposed that there would be no payments of honorariums at this time. This was unanimously agreed
3. Linda Gilhooly proposed that minutes of meetings be distributed to any committee members unable to attend. It was agreed that this practice would be adopted at future meetings.

Chairman’s Closing Remarks - see appendix 7

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked the scrutineers and all present for attending and declared the A.G.M closed.

Chairman..... Secretary.....

Appendices:

1. Chairman’s Opening Remarks
2. Treasurer’s Report
3. Pensions and Welfare Report
4. Pipe Band Report
5. Nominations for Executive and Committee
6. AOB – item 1
7. Chairman’s Closing Remarks

**CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS**

Good Morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this unusual AGM.

It's been a very difficult year thanks to COVID and the building being closed for most of this year.

So, a lot of today's AGM will be published online.

Much of today's business has been pre-printed to assist COVID safety.

In March 2020. We were required by the government to lockdown and had to adapt to a new way of managing the Branch and Club

e.g. Risk Assessments, enhanced cleaning and PPE for staff etc.

We did manage to partially open in July but only on a part time basis, and we were not allowed to host entertainments or events.

Other casualties of the COVID crisis were Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Day and Armistice Day.

The Covid Crisis has required us to adapt to circumstances. We have been able to use the internet for communication with members and have used email, Facebook and our website to push information out to as many members we can reach by these means. Fortunately, the majority of our members are now internet connected and this year we received some membership renewals electronically and had three times as many responses to our AGM notices than previously.

Notice of this AGM and information of intended AGM business to be discussed, was emailed to 83 members and posted to a further 69 (our full membership effective 28 Nov).

30 members responded to our emails and 2 responded to our letter.

Of these, 4 members have submitted items for discussion.

We have an approved Risk Assessment for our hall which enabled us to provide a socially distanced membership renewal process. To avoid any choke points we had a one-way system and offered a choice of 5 different dates to attend. A number of members expressed their thanks for the efforts made on their behalf. We also received a number of letters confirming members have read the materials and have no comment or have offered questions or suggestions.

It doesn't look like we will be out of this crisis until spring next year.

We are still adapting to the new normal and doing our best to keep the Branch and Club going.

## **TREASURERS REPORT**

### **Overview**

- The Annual Accounts presented to last year's AGM indicated the Branch is financially stable whilst the Social Club revenue had increased but net profit was a bit disappointing.
- For the first few months of this financial year Club revenues were trending upwards until Covid-19 brought us to a sudden halt in March.
- We invested heavily in making the Club a safe place to socialise and were allowed to open again mid-July. However, not being able to host events and entertainment, our revenues shrunk to a quarter of what it was and we embarked on a range of cost saving measures.
- We were able to secure Business Closure and Job Retention grants plus Business Restriction more recently.
- Unsurprisingly, membership renewals and Poppy Day collection takings are down.
- Unrestricted trading is unlikely until at least spring next year. Consequently, we are now making plans how we can fulfil our Charitable Purpose and stay engaged with Members and the wider community over the winter months.

### **Branch Report**

Acting Treasurer Derrick Jeffrey (an Army veteran), provided the Treasurer's Report at last year's AGM. He advised that he would resign in March 2020 and another Army veteran Iain Maddox was recruited to replace him.

Membership was reported at last year's AGM as 165, which was less than the previous year. Derrick Jeffrey recommended the Branch Committee needed to encourage more memberships. However, membership has fallen to 155 this year. It is hardly surprising some members have not viewed membership renewal as being relevant whilst not able to socialise at the Dunbar Legion during the Covid crisis. However, this also reveals we have more work to do to demonstrate the value of supporting our charitable purpose. In response to Derrick Jeffrey's recommendation, the Committee has been discussing how we can demonstrate the benefits of membership and we have seen some encouraging signs of both renewals from lapsed members as well as new member applications.

OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) advised that it would be a breach of Charity Law if we used Branch funds to support our social club during the Covid crisis. RBLS (Royal British Legion Scotland) recommended we adopt new Club Model Rules and become incorporated as a Co-operative Society. Following detailed discussion, it was unanimously agreed by the Committee to recommend this to our members at an EGM. Taken together, these two measures require a clear distinction between the Branch as a charity and the Social Club as a business.

Royal Navy veteran Sharon Kaszuba has taken responsibility for distributing Poppy Day collection cans and reports takings are down due to less footfall in shops and restaurants. The generous people of Dunbar have nonetheless contributed £2,314.42.

RBLS have prepared our Branch Annual Accounts this year and we are very grateful for their support. Branch Annual Accounts are presented for review in three documents which are:

1. Receipts and Payments.
2. Trustees Annual Report.
3. Independent Examiners Report.

These reports will be submitted to OSCR and RBLS once they are adopted.

### **Recommendations:**

- a. A Work Group should be set up to determine how to increase member renewals, recruitment and retention.
- b. An EGM should be scheduled for early 2021 to allow for members to consider the New Club Model.
- c. Due to financial restraints and despite the high level of commitment by Committee Executives, I recommend that no Honorarium payments are awarded at this time.

**Pensions and Welfare Report**

The welfare committee are here to help any member who requires help or support.

At the beginning of lockdown, we sent a letter to all members offering help to any who needed assistance. We also telephoned as many members as possible, reinforcing our offer and opening a point of contact if needed.

Fortunately, our members are a resilient group and we mostly handled requests for information rather than appeals for support.

We have sent a number of vouchers to members whom we have been advised suffered illness or medical difficulty during this year.

**Dunbar RBL Pipe Band Report**

2020 has meant a season off from competing for the band and a chance to work on new material and develop some of our younger members so they are ready to join the big band. We have taken to digital platforms to continue our practices and teaching through skype holding video calls on a weekly basis to keep everyone together.

Next year's competitions are being talked about and planned so we are going to prepare as if they are on until we are advised otherwise. It is most likely that perhaps only the last 2 will go ahead (Scottish and Worlds) however there are other options being discussed by the RSPBA.

The band has also supported some of our local engagements this year with players taking part in the addition of names to the war memorial (in August 2020); remembrance day service for armistice day and the Christmas lights switch on via live stream (both in November). We also had a video on the live stream to advertise for new members and learners.

The band members always remain committed to volunteering their time to teach kids in our local community to keep the band alive. We will most likely be advertising for new learners in the New Year to make sure we can give the children in the Dunbar community a chance to learn either piping or drumming at the legion club. We will start these classes when it is safe to do so and when the restrictions allow.

**Nominations for Executive and Committee.**

Post - Chairman	Proposer	Seconder
D Laing	I Maddox	L Gilhooly
Post - Vice Chairman	Proposer	Seconder
R Gilbertson	E Bolton	S Smith
Post - Secretary	Proposer	Seconder
I Maddox	R Gilbertson	D Laing
Post - Treasurer	Proposer	Seconder
K Tolputt	D Laing	M Kaszuba
Members -Committee	Proposer	Seconder
Alex McCredie	L Gilhooly	David Bolton
Alastair McCredie		
Ryan Barson	S Smith	R Gilbertson
Chris Empson	I Maddox	D Laing
Anne Herkes	R Gilbertson	I Maddox



**AOB**

We have had three letters and one email from members, asking a number of questions or posting comment. Our response to these are as follows:

1. There has been a suggestion that the Committee Executive is “all sewn up”.

This is both untrue and an unfair accusation. The Executive nominees listed have each spent only one year on the Executive, or in a post as Assistant to an Executive office. It is a normal expectation that officers spend a minimum of 2 years in post and that is what is proposed by the published list. The only reason for a ‘shuffle’ of posts within the Executive personnel is the retirement of our Secretary this year.

It is only natural that proposals are made and seconded by committee members. They, of course, are the people who have worked alongside the candidates and are well placed to endorse their candidacy.

That said, it is important that we are not seen to be operating a closed shop. To ensure fairness, the membership was invited by email and letter to review or object to nominations for committee positions and in the absence of any negative response, the proposed list is unchanged.

2. It has been suggested that decisions are being made without committee discussion.

It is not true that decisions are being made without committee discussion. Committee meetings are held monthly. The Executive are routinely required to make day to day decisions whenever the need arises. These decisions are ratified at subsequent committee meetings.

3. A member has criticised us for installing CCTV which they view as “spying”.

We installed CCTV in response to staff concerns, customer feedback and to help with Covid-19 Regulation compliance. It has already proven to be a good investment for all of these reasons. Our signage throughout the building clearly advises all occupants that monitoring is in operation 24 hrs per day. To clarify, the definition of monitor is “a device used for observing, checking, or keeping a continuous record of something” and that is the intended use of our CCTV.

4. It has been questioned why we are conducting membership renewals and this AGM on our normal schedule.

Membership renewal requests are sent to us by Area HQ. There is a timetable for renewals and we saw no reasonable advantage to postponing. This year’s membership stands at 155 and we will continue to offer members opportunities to renew.

Our accounts are compiled at the end of our financial year and we are required to approve these at AGM within 2 calendar months. In addition, the retirement of key officers requires AGM approved replacements. Only essential matters are being discussed at this AGM. Members will be invited to attend an EGM as soon as social gathering regulations permit.

5. It has been suggested that we should do more to reach out to elderly members over the winter months.

We can report that this has already been discussed in committee and plans are being formulated and costed to better fulfil the Branch’s charitable purpose.

6. A member has suggested that any pool or snooker team representing RBL Dunbar should be made up by members from RBL Dunbar.

We are happy to advise that the pool team players have submitted their Legion membership forms this year. In addition, the pool team organiser is nominated to join the committee this year.

7. A member has highlighted the need for members to given advance notice of any AGM and the nomination committee posts.

We can advise that notice of the AGM was posted on our website, emailed to all members who have supplied an email address and posted to all remaining members. Advance notice of committee nominations is as noted above in third paragraph of item 1.

**CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS**

I want to mention some people whose contribution to the RBLs Dunbar Branch and Club is widely appreciated:

We are grateful to Derrick Jeffrey for his time as Treasurer

Thanks to Vice-Chair Duncan Laing, new Treasurer Iain Maddox and Assistant Treasurer Kim Tolputt for the massive amount of work they contributed since the Covid Crisis hit us in March.

Since March, our Bar Manager Laura Logan has contributed a lot of volunteer time over and above her paid work.

Today is the date of retirement for Jane Glass. Retiring from our bar staff team, having been with us for over 40 years.

After 40 years Janet Cessford has retired from her post as Poppy Convener.

We are thankful to Sharon Kaszuba who has taken up the Poppy Convener role this year.

Thanks also to Davie Birnie and Kenny Williams for their help with building maintenance and

Covid-safe preparation work. Both have stood down from the committee this year and I thank them for all their efforts over the years.

Thanks to all committee and members, past and present.

And finally, many thanks to Elizabeth Bolton who is stepping down from Committee work after many years of valuable service to the Legion.