

Minutes of The Royal British Legion Scotland, Thurso Branch Committee meeting held in the Clubrooms, Riverside Road on Thursday 23 February 2023

Present: Mac McGill
Simon Middlemas
Joe McNeil
John Blake
Ron Galloway
Alex Mathers
Robert Gray
Zena Latcham
Ian MacKay (Guest)

Chair
President

Apologies: Albert McIvor
Tim Hooper
Karin Freeman
Roy Kirk

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mac McGill, the new Chair, welcomed those present and opened the meeting. He said he may bring a slightly different style to proceedings and would be looking for interaction from the members during discussions.

2. SILENT TRIBUTE

The President led the silent tribute at the invitation of the Chair.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mac thanked his predecessor, Simon Middlemas, for his input and work in the position and for his guidance on assuming the post. He also asked Committee members to feel free to comment and asked for their support and guidance while he settles in. He hopes to bring new energy to the Branch and with this in mind he asked the members how they were feeling and state when they last felt at their best in a round table discussion. He was impressed how we fit in as part of the town community with a growing membership and hoped we continue to attract people, although the wider RBL organisation at national and area level is perceived to require radical change to remain relevant in the modern era.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last Branch meeting, RBL-TBC(2022)M05, held in the Clubrooms on Thursday 24 November 2022 had been circulated in advance to members. These were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting. The minutes were proposed by Robert Gray and seconded by Joe MacNeil.

No issues were raised from the minutes.

5. STATUS OF ACTIONS

See Appendix.

6. BRANCH FINANCIAL REPORT

Joe McNeil noted the following:

- Bank account currently sat at £15,000
- Capitation Fee's of £10,200 to pay to RBLs HQ.
- Membership renewal income has been coming in steadily.
- OSCR report due in next couple of months.
- Expects Branch account to settle around £7,000 after activity.
- Five small wreaths ordered at a cost of £140.

The Chairman asked what the optimum holding in the Branch account should be and the Treasurer stated he would like it be around £10,000. In this regard, fundraising for the Branch was raised and will be referenced later.

7. SPORTS CONVENERS REPORT

We do not currently have a Sports Convener and RBLs HQ have cancelled sports at National and Area level for this year at least, leaving it to individual Branches and Clubs to organise as they see fit. On the subject, Robert Gray stated that member John Bain may be willing to assume the position of Sports Convener and this will be investigated. Although not official RBLs sports we have entered pool teams in the local winter league for the last few years and they have competed well.

8. ANGLING CONVENOR'S REPORT

John Blake noted that:

- The Angling Section held their AGM and presentation of trophies meeting but it was poorly attended, with no changes to the Committee positions, with no younger members showing an interest to step up to the plate. He stated the Angling Section had 42 members during the 2022 season, with 30 currently for this year, which is expected to rise as the season approaches.
- Work has begun in the Sea Cadet Hall on the refurbishment of the boats now that they have all been taken ashore, but is impacted by a lack of volunteers to assist. Two remain to be progressed.
- Take up on the activities had been reasonable throughout the season.
- There has been no winter sea angling trips this season due to inclement weather which contrasts with last winter when the trips held yielded good catches.
- Mac stated he had just found out about the existence of the DFFA (Dounreay Fly Fishing Association). John stated they were subsidised by Dounreay to some degree whereas our Angling Section is completely self-sufficient.

9. FUNDRAISING REPORT & ARMED FORCES DAY PLANNING

Various options were aired for fundraising activities to supplement and enhance the Branch account going forward. We currently host Car Boot sales in our Function Hall for various organisations, with the income going to the hirers. John Blake suggested we hold one in-house with the proceeds allocated to the Branch and this will be looked at. We also hosted Branch coffee mornings in the past which may be worth looking at again.

In Roy's absence, Simon led the discussion on Armed Forces Day planning. The Cadet units have been contacted and indicated their willingness to support. Other organisations contacted include the Boys Brigade and the Rotary Club and feedback to date has been positive. Mac suggested we reach out to the community to raise awareness, such as the schools and colleges.

He also suggested we contact the Rugby Club and the local Masonic Lodge to see if they could offer any support. With this in mind, Simon will update his Armed Forces Day planning document which will be circulated to Committee members in due course.

10. WELFARE REPORT

Zena Latcham gave an update of the welfare situation. As usual it has been very quiet with no enquiries made, although the hard work she and the previous conveners carried out was noted. It was also noted that there are 17 other organisations with similar goals, such as SSAFA etc, so it is a packed field in which to operate. Ian Mackay (guest) has some experience of the subject and suggested he may be willing to assist Zena with regard to promoting the RBLs welfare offering further which was welcomed. Currently we promote welfare on our Facebook and website pages and it was suggested this could be supplemented with a poster campaign around the local area. With this in mind, it was agreed we continue to promote our Welfare offering and stand ready to assist at any time if required.

11. COMMUNICATIONS

Simon Middlemas noted that the website was now up to date, but suggested we upload more recent pictures of the premises to replace the current examples. The entertainment section now pointed to Facebook for current up-to-date information and is reinforced by the new information TV screen installed outside the Bar door facing members and guests on entry. He also suggested when the Hall renovations are completed we invite the local press to do an article to promote the premises.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Simon gave an update to attendees of the H&I Area Council AGM he attended in Nairn on Sat 04th Feb. The main topics from our point of view were the long term future of RBLs and the Club Model Rules 2020 which we have adopted. The draft minutes of this meeting were circulated by the Branch Secretary to our Branch Committee members on 13th Feb after receipt from the Area Secretary and can be referred to for further information.

Mac asked about our letter template and the Secretary agreed to e-mail him an example.

Mac McGill
Chair, RBL Branch Committee
04 December 2022

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

None

ACTIONS ONGOING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

None

ACTIONS COMPLETED SINCE LAST MEETING

RBL-TBC(2022)M05/A01: Simon to send out sheet highlighting Committee positions and recommendations to members and guests.

RBL-TBC(2022)M04/A01: Simon Middlemas to explore Fares4Free website in relation to supporting veterans. Website link [HOME \(fares4free.org\)](http://fares4free.org)

RBL-TBC(2022)M03/A02: Simon Middlemas and Zena Latcham to get together to update welfare website pages. Simon Middlemas agreed to update Welfare pages on website.