

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CHAIRMANS AND EXECUTIVE REPORT FOR FY 2024-2025

The Not Forgotten Northern Ireland has had a challenging year due to the resignation of key staff within the executive and general committee and we have implemented key changes to how we govern and run the organisation leading to a re-write of our constitution, how we conduct our meetings and now included all of the general committee members to be in attendance at all of our meetings to ensure that we have complete approval for events, spending requirements and overall governance. We have also approved that the post of Events Coordinator within the organisation is no longer required, and the organisation of events is coordinated between all of the committee. I am deeply grateful to Dr David Longmore and Mr John Stewart for re-writing our constitution to reflect the changes of our governance procedures and eligibility etc and these have been approved by the complete committee at our pre-AGM meeting held at the Somme Nursing home in Belfast on 16 Aug 25 and reflect the constitution of the main Not Forgotten London.

These changes are starting to bear fruit and the Christmas Lunch at the Killyhelvin Hotel in Enniskillen where we had 94 attendees present at the event and the feed back from this event are listed below. The other, slightly smaller event held at Sinton's on the Bridge at SCARVA had over 50 veterans attending this event and again the feedback from the beneficiaries was very positive and is included within my report. All of this is due to the hard work and dedication of all of the committee members but in particular; the secretary Mrs Joan McCabe, Treasurer Ms Hilary Balance, Vice Chairman Mr Bobby Morrow, Committee members Mr John Stewart, Mr Gordon Corke and Mr Alan McCullough our webmaster with overall responsibility for our web and Facebook pages and Mr Douggie Durrant for continuing to provide excellent photographs from our events held in NI.

Our calendar for this FY was not only centred around the events at Killyhelvin and Scarva for our beneficiaries, but we also managed to squeeze in concerts at the Waterfront Hall for 20 personnel for an evening of entertainment provided by the military band and pipes and drums from the Royal Irish Regiment with a country and western concert held at Mossley Mill for 12 beneficiaries. More importantly we continue to support the staff and residents of the Somme Nursing home year in year and have increased the grant to £1000 on an annual basis in addition to attending events at the home during the FY. I would like to thank the Chief Executive and his staff for continuing to facilitate our committee meetings at the home. Moreover, NF NI continues to attend memorial and commemoration events in NI and this has been a busy year with VE day 80 events and we were proud to have attended events at the Somme Nursing home for both occasions and would like to thank all of the committee members who attended

these events. My Vice Chairman Mr Bobby Morrow continues to lay a wreath on behalf NF NI at the Cenotaph in Belfast and at the annual service commemorating the Battle of the Somme.

One area of concern that we have noted is the reduction in spaces for our beneficiaries to attend the annual garden party at Buckingham Palace in May of each year and the annual Christmas party at St James Palace in December of each our allocation has been reduced to 6-8 beneficiaries attending events and more importantly NF London only book The Union Jack Club for the night before the events and NF NI are left to pick up the additional costs of accommodating attendees and committee members from our funds which is proving difficult as we go forward in to the next and subsequent financial years. Factor in the additional costs for flights to and from Belfast and travel from the arrival airport to the Union Jack Club are now in the region of £3000 for each event and a greater breakdown of the costs incurred are listed in the annual accounts. The cost increases are not only impacting us for the London events, BUT the NI events have ALSO increased significantly since the end of the COVID period for provision of food, room hire and entertainment have all increased significantly and we now need to plan our events around the cost and locations for events in order to achieve value for money. We have lessened the number of events within NI and are more focussed on providing a quality event for our beneficiaries with good food, good craic good entertainment and a great level of support the model that we had in place for the Killyhelvin and Scarva and this has been well received by the beneficiaries.

Mrs Rosemary Lowry the widow of Maj Barrie Lowry got in touch with us as she wanted to hand over a great deal of publications, minutes of previous meetings dating back many years and historical journals in addition to military artefacts which we are still assessing. We are extremely thankful to Mrs Lowrie, and her late husband were excellent supporters of NFA and NFNI. What was pleasing to read in some of the annual reports how much NF NI reaches out to our veteran community in NI and the excellent level of interaction we have with other 3rd sector veteran charities in NI going back many years and how much the beneficiaries enjoy our events. As we now start the planning for our 100th anniversary this treasure trove of history will be of great use to us as we prepare for this historic milestone.

We were also deeply saddened at the passing of a long-standing member of NFA NI and NF NI - Mr John Davies MBE, who was heavily involved with us over many years in the role of committee member, chairman and Vice President of NF NI and the loss was deeply felt within the veteran community. He was heavily involved with RAFA, Somme Nursing Home, and Chair of the Veteran Affairs and Pension Committee and we miss his knowledge and wit. We offer our sincere condolences to his widow Dorothy at this time and we will continue to engage with her to appraise her on NF NI events.

In conclusion, we have come through a trying 6-9 months as outline in this report and we are grateful to all of the support that we received. Leopardstown Park Hospital Trust, UDR Benevolent fund, personal donations, raffle fund money and lastly to the Veterans Foundation for supporting us with a grant of £14000

Ben Higgins, BEM

01 Sep 25