



THE RAG
ARMY & NAVY CLUB

CANDIDATES' ELECTION STATEMENTS

Army and Navy Club (The Rag)
Board Election 2026

Please read carefully before casting your vote.

Harry Neal Hindley Farmer



Proposer: Reverend James McWhirter RN

I, Reverend James McWhirter RN, am delighted to propose Mr Harry Farmer to the Board.

Harry is an established member of the Club and is keen to offer his service as a Board member. He was initially attracted to the Club through historic ties with the military and joined when he was called to the bar. He now practices in Derby and has recently been made a partner at his law firm. I met Harry at HMS Sherwood, where he is training as an RNR Officer.

Harry speaks very highly of the Club and is keen to offer his undoubted talent as a barrister to the Board. I sense that he will fit into the mix very well and will be a huge asset to the Rag.

I strongly endorse Harry's application.

Seconded: Lord Fermoy

I am writing to formally second Mr Harry Farmer for the position of Board Member at the Rag.

I have known Harry for a number of years as a friend, his standards of integrity and discretion are first rate.

In regard to his work, he will bring the same skills of that of a barrister to the Board: analytical thinking, interpersonal skills, integrity and ethics, attention to detail and strategic thinking.

I am confident these qualities would make a strong contribution to the Club and its Board. I fully support his candidacy and recommend him without reservation.

Lord Fermoy

Summary of relevant experience

Relevant awards Middle Temple Monroe Debating Cup, Winner: The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple

The Kings Chambers Award: for advocacy

Professional qualifications/experience Called to the Bar: as a barrister by the The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple

2026 - Present: Royal Navy Reserve Officer Cadet

March 2026 - Present: Director and Head of Property at Bradley and Jefferies Commercial Solicitors (BJCS)

- In addition to my other work within the firm I now have direct oversight and responsibility for the overall financial interest of the firm, including fee earner management, fee recovery and compliance management.

November 2022 - March 2026: Head of Commercial Property at BJCS

A. In furtherance to the below I was also now responsible for:-

- managing and training a team of junior staff members as well as intermittently overseeing some aspect of our residential property and employment fee earning.
- Managing departmental budgets, fee earning targets and utilisation.

B. During this time I managed the Dispute Resolution department for several months involving the day to day running of commercial and civil litigation matters and managing the legal, logistical and interpersonal issues of complex and convoluted civil litigation matters.

October 2021 – March 2026: Commercial Property Lawyer at BJCS

I was responsible for

- Managing in excess of 100 files
- A range of commercial matters including leases and transactions of prominent London and Cotswolds based property.
- Regularly liaising with local authorities in relation to planning matters and listed building issues.

May 2021 – October 2021: Lawyer BJCS

I assisted fee-earners in Company Commercial, Dispute Resolution, Commercial Property and the Employment department.

2020 - Marshal to Sir Matthew Nicklin KC FRSA

2019 - Marshal to Sir Nicholas Lavender KC

How I would add value

Alongside Royal Navy Reserve officer training, I have been called to the Bar as a barrister, subsequently cross-qualified as a practicing solicitor, with experience in commercial property, commercial litigation and employment law. I have a strong network of solicitors and barristers across a wide range of practice areas, which I am confident could be called upon to help us in keeping ahead of the curve in respect of legal developments impacting the Club.

As a director of my firm, my position affords me extensive experience managing a substantial caseload alongside a staff team. I can therefore offer valuable insight into the intricacies and complexities of balancing business interests alongside social structures. I am pragmatic, concise, and comfortable working as part of a team; my directorial position requires that I am assured in taking leadership without being overbearing. I am accustomed to considerable analytical thinking, decisiveness, summarising and presenting key information in a digestible manner. I would apply these same time and project management skills to anything I might undertake with the Board.

I acknowledge that I am presently a newer member of the Club, although I have attended the Club since I was 18/19. Notwithstanding this I firmly believe I possess a unique perspective and skill set that would allow me to be of service to the Club. I would approach the role with a strong sense of duty, seeking to contribute in a practical and meaningful way and to support the continued success and stewardship of the Club.

Lizzie McWhirter MA



Proposer: Lieutenant Commander Andrew Martin

I have seen Professor Caroline Gatrell's statement supporting Mrs Lizzie McWhirter's election three years ago and I concur with her remarks. I will add that during the period of Mrs Lizzie McWhirter's service as a board member over the last three years she has delivered on her undertakings, and more – the Rag Choir in particular has thrived largely due to her enthusiasm and support, and the increase in Club membership has no doubt benefitted from her input to the Membership Committee. She has enhanced the Club's membership for ladies and represented their views at board level which will continue with her re-election.

I therefore support her candidature and am privileged to call her a friend.

Seconded: Miss Georgina Whiteside

I am very pleased to support Lizzie McWhirter's application for re-election to the Board and delighted to second her nomination.

Lizzie is highly engaged within the Club, actively contributing and leading the Book Club and Choir circles, but also as a current Board member. She demonstrates a strong awareness, understanding, and genuine commitment to the Club and its future, consistently advocating on behalf of members and is actively engaged at many club events. Recently, as part of the review of Club merchandise, Lizzie has ensured that both the membership and the Board have been consulted and kept informed throughout the design of the ladies' brooch.

Lizzie brings a balanced perspective, thoughtfully combining a long-term strategic outlook with an understanding of current member needs, while upholding the Club's military ethos.

Summary of relevant experience

A strategic and creative thinker, and an experienced communicator, with senior-level expertise in quality assurance, governance, and inspection at national level. A committed supporter of The Rag for over 12 years, with strong engagement in military life and community.

Board and Governance Experience

- Board member Army and Navy Club and member of RAG Membership Committee (July 2023 to present)
- Trustee, Military Wives Choirs (2023–present)
- Lead, Regional Voices Group, Military Wives Choirs (2023–present)
- Member, Strategic Objectives Group, Military Wives Choirs (2020–present)
- Trustee Committee roles: Musical Development and Wellbeing; Communications, PR and Social Media; Finance, Fundraising and Governance
- Founder member, Regional Voices Group (East of England representative), contributing to the development of a national and international network

Professional Experience

- Independent Inspection Consultant (2016–present)
- Statutory Inspector of Anglican and Methodist Schools (1999–2024)
- Quality Assurance Assessor for trainee inspectors (2010–2024), including senior and lead inspector responsibilities at national level
- Member, Inspection Training Team; Pastoral and Spiritual Tutor (2020–2024)

Advisory and Leadership Roles

- Member, RE Quality Mark Advisory Group (2021–present)
- Representative, Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants to the RE Council of England and Wales
- Member, RE Today Editorial Team (2006–2020)

Earlier Career

- Lecturer in Religious Education, University of Hertfordshire (1993–1998)
- Religious Affairs Producer and Presenter, local radio (1993–1998)
- Regular contributor to BFBS radio (2021–present)

Continued over

Education and Publications

- MA in Religious Education, University of London (1989–1991)
- Co-author of Be Bold (CHP, 2004) and other educational publications

How I would add value

I am seeking re-election to the Board, on which I have served for the past three years, with a specific focus on Membership having been part of the Membership Committee for three years.

During my present term, I have been a key contributor to member engagement. I have supported the work of the Committee in growing and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive membership. I have also led a research initiative into new Club merchandise, helping to ensure it reflects the breadth of our membership, including our female members. I remain committed to supporting the Board in sustaining the Club's strong sense of community and purpose.

By background, I bring extensive high-level experience as a strategic thinker and communicator, with senior-level involvement in quality assurance and inspection at a national level. Alongside this, I have been a committed supporter of The Rag for over 12 years and remain pro-actively engaged in military life.

My husband James, also a committed RAG member, serves as a Royal Navy chaplain at HMS Sherwood.

Within the Club, I am a committed member of the Rag Choir and I lead the Rag Book Club. I aim to be approachable and attentive to members' views, whilst contributing constructively and with sound judgement to Board discussions.

Beyond the Club, I hold leadership and executive trustee responsibilities within the Military Wives Choirs, shaping strategy, governance, and member wellbeing across a national organisation. This experience informs my approach to service on the Board, particularly in balancing tradition with thoughtful development.

If re-elected, I will continue to support the Club's long-term future by encouraging broader and more diverse membership, including younger members and women, whilst upholding the Club's valued military ethos and traditions.

I would be honoured to continue to serve the Club and its members.

Lieutenant Colonel M.E. Spragg



Proposer: Brigadier James Tanner OBE

Dear Laurence,

I am delighted to propose Mark for re-election to the Board of the Army and Navy Club. His proven track record as a Club member and Board member goes without saying. But I have known Mark since his earliest days in the Staffordshire Regiment in the early 1980s and he has always been the most steadfast, hardworking, loyal and honest fellow.

Kind regards

Brigadier James Tanner

Seconded: Major General Peter Grant Peterkin CB OBE

Dear Laurence,

I would be delighted to again support Mark Spragg for election to the Rag Board. I am a great believer in Board continuity in cases where the incumbent has been committed to the role and his success in the Membership numbers is testament to that.

Best wishes,

Major General Peter Grant Peterkin

Summary of relevant experience

Experienced senior generalist manager and business development professional. Wide experience of senior level liaison and negotiation between service and government/ business, to ministerial level. Technical training to the highest management and operational skill levels combined with aspects of budgetary control, personal assessment and training needs analysis. Extensive experience in leadership roles, team building, project management, operations management and change management.

British Army: Joined in 1984 after attending university and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst leaving the Regular Army in 1992 in the rank of Major re-joining in 1995 following a period teaching in the independent sector. Leaving in 2005 in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Post Service:

2005-8: Executive Recruitment

2008 to date: Regional Manager National federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC)

- Successful management of the regional membership base during difficult economic conditions
- Administrative support to the regional chairman and committee in all respects
- Raising regional NFRC profile through:
 - Development , planning and management of all regional events and sponsorship
 - PR and media support
 - Communication to business and wider community
- Liaison with and support to NFRC national headquarters
- Management of regional funding and accounting
- Coordination of all elements of customer support including promotion of NFRC services and complaints
- Liaison at regional level with other business organisations including insurance providers

How I would add value

I was first elected onto the Board in 2023 and shortly after became Chair of the Membership Committee. In the last 3 years, I believe the Membership Committee has achieved some success towards increasing the number of paying members through various targeted recruitment initiatives and with the help of the Membership Office team, members' retention has been increased despite a very tough economic background. I hope that by being elected for a second term, I will be able to continue with the important steps taken so far and to keep promoting the ethos of the Club for which I have a great affection. The Club is its members and its employees and, as a Board member, I would continue to do my utmost to protect and further their interests.