

**FALKLAND ISLANDS ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021**

MOTION 5 – ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRMAN

STATEMENT BY NOMINEE – RUSSELL LA FORTE CBE



My service in the Falkland Islands from 2013 to 2015 as Commander British Forces, accompanied by my wife Gillian who worked as a nurse in Stanley, was the highlight of a 42-year career in the RAF. Travelling and socialising widely throughout our tour, we developed an abiding affection for the Islands and their wonderful people. It was without hesitation therefore, that I joined the FIA immediately upon my return to the UK, determined to play whatever small part I could to support the right of Falkland Islanders to decide their own future.

Upon my retirement last November last year, I was co-opted onto the Executive Council and the past 12 months have given me a detailed insight into the day-to-day workings of our Association, not least the passion and commitment of its members. When the prospect of standing for election as Chairman was raised, my principal concern was that how high the bar had been set by the current incumbent, the redoubtable Paul Martinez!

Nevertheless, I am delighted to put myself forward for the membership's consideration as the next Chairman and would intend serving in the post for 2 years. After a Covid-enforced period of consolidation and comparatively more muted activity, I hope we can build upon this great work and enable our Association to get more onto the front foot, where it belongs.