

Robert J. Symons – RD, FRSA, FCMI, Solicitor (Rtd)

Bob was born in Swansea in 1946 but spent his early years in Uganda where his father was in the Colonial Service. He then went to boarding schools in Devon but once his parents returned to England he attended Sir Thomas Rich's School in Gloucester. He was then articled to Solicitors in Gloucester between 1965 and 1970 and attended the College of Law in Bristol. He qualified in 1970 and joined Shrewsbury Council as their Prosecuting Solicitor and later moved to Telford as Planning Solicitor. In 1983 he became Chief Executive Officer of Daventry Council until 1999 when he joined the United Nations and was posted to Kosovo where he served as a Civil Affairs Officer for six and a half years. He returned to England in 2006 and, after living in Taunton for ten years, moved back to Daventry to be nearer to his family. He became Secretary of the Daventry Liberal Democrat Party and a Governor of Ashby Fields Primary School.

Bob joined the Sea Cadets in Gloucester in 1962, became an Instructor and then a S/Lt (SCC) RNR in Gloucester and then Telford Units. In 1972 he transferred to the permanent RNR as a Lt (S) and served in HMS EAGLET in Liverpool as Captain's Secretary and SO(Cash). He was promoted Lieutenant Commander in 1980 and became Supply Officer in 1981. He transferred to Coventry CTC (which became HMS MERCIA) in 1983 and became Executive Officer in 1984 and Commanding Officer from 1985 to 1991. He was promoted Commander in 1990 and after a short spell as Deputy Director (Resources)(RNR) during 1992 was again CO from 1993 to 1994. On the closure of HMS MERCIA in 1994 he transferred to HMS FORWARD in Birmingham as Commanding Officer until 1997. His annual RN training included Captain's Secretary in HMS BRISTOL, DSO in HMS AJAX and in PHQ Orkney in Scapa Flow on several occasions in both admin and NCS appointments. He transferred to the Naval Control of Shipping Branch in 1980 and appointments included Boarding Officer in PHQ Greenwich and PHQ Humber, NavReptOff Dundee, SONCS PHQ Liverpool, and SOO for BOA 93. His last appointment before retiring from the RNR in 1999 was as the RNR Representative on the Reserve Forces Association. When he returned to the UK he joined the Exeter Flotilla (of which his father had also been a member) and served on the Committee as Cadet Liaison Officer and General Secretary until he moved away from the West Country. Bob became an External Trustee of the Maritime Volunteer Service in January 2021 and was appointed Membership Secretary in February 2021. In December 2021 he became the Director of Legal Affairs.

