

The Royal Engineers Association

(Registered under the Charities Act 1992 and a charity registered in Scotland)

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



All correspondence to:

The Controller
RE Association
Brompton Bks
CHATHAM
Kent
ME4 4UG

Telephone: 01634 847005
Website: www.reahq.org.uk
Email:
controller@rhqre.co.uk

All Council Members
All Management Committee Members
All Group Secretaries
All Branch Secretaries
Controller REA
Corps Treasurer

07 Sep 2018

**THE MINUTES OF 73rd MEETING OF ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL HELD IN
HELD IN ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA, LONDON ON THURSDAY 06
SEPTEMBER 2018.**

PRESENT

Maj Gen Alistair S Dickinson CBE	President REA
Brig (Retd) Andy S Craig OBE	Chairman REA
Brig Matt Bazeley	Comdt HQ RSME
Col Matt Quare MBE ADC	Corps Colonel
Lt Col (Retd) Larry Inge	Retired Officer
Maj (Retd) Phil Gill MBE JP	South West Group
Mr Eric Hargreaves	North West Group
Maj (Retd) P Luscombe	North Midlands Group
Mr Bob E C Prosser BEM	North East Group
Mr John R Bell	Scotland & NI Group
Lt Col Martin Heffer RE TD	Reserve Army Officer
Maj (Retd) Phil Webb TD	London Group

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Kenneth M Kirk	Controller REA and Secretary
Maj (Retd) Ian Sidebottom	Corps Treasurer
Maj (Retd) Iain George	Assistant Controller REA

APOLOGIES

Col (Retd) Chris M Davies MBE	REA Hon Treasurer
Lt Col (Retd) Adrian J Bunting	Central Southern Group
Mr Brian Simm	East Anglia Group
Mr Garrie Owens	South East Group
WO1 (CSM) Steve Webster	Corps SM
WO2 (QMSI) Simon Tolley	South Midlands Group

ITEM 1.0 - Declaration of conflicts of interest

1.1 The President explained that Charity Commission expects all charities to have a standard agenda item at the start of all trustee meetings asking each trustee to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest. This procedure should, at least, ensure that conflicts of interest are identified at the earliest opportunity. He asked the trustees to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

1.2 Phil Webb advised the committee that he sat on Richmond Hill Trust fund as representative of the veterans.

John Bell advised the committee that he was a trustee of the Royal British Legion Scotland.

1.3 There were no further conflicts of interest, actual or potential, declared by any of the remaining trustees.

ITEM 2.0 – To confirm the minutes of the 72nd Meeting

The President emphasised that they were only dealing with the accuracy of the Minutes for the record. No comments or proposed amendments have been received and he asked the meeting for their approval as to their accuracy. Council accepted that the Minutes of the 72nd Meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The President signed the Minutes.

ITEM 3.0 - To consider matters arising from the proceedings of the 72nd Meeting of Council

Item 5.0 Guide to Benevolence the President asked the controller to explain what progress we had made with a the guide to benevolence, the controller explained that he was exploring a number of options but the main opportunity was to produce a couple of short animations that could be accessed on the website and social media. This could also be available to serving soldiers through the e-learning media. The controller estimated a cost of £3-5k for this. Brig Bazeley suggested that contact should be made with Mid-Kent College media students who had recently produced an info video for RSME at no cost.

The President highlighted the need for specific controls regarding the decision making process and ensuring that the best governance practice was in place when embarking on new initiatives.

Action Controller by 01 May 2019

Item 6.0 Prizes and Awards, the President outlined the awards currently provided by the REA. The Corps Colonel took the opportunity to advise the committee of the Engineering Awards Dinner on 28 November and that the REA will be heavily branded at the Dinner.

The recruiting committee is to continue to review prizes for the Corp as this is a good method of reinforcing the REA brand and service to the wider Corps Community

Action: Recruiting committee ongoing

The President requested that the attendance of Sapper Network Limited at the AGM was confirmed

Action: Controller by 11 Sep 2018

ITEM 4.0 - To take note of the proceedings of the 129th meeting of the Management Committee

The President confirmed that everyone had seen the minutes of the 129th management meeting and that there were no matters arising from the meeting that needed to be brought to the attention of the Council.

ITEM 5.0 - To note the Report on Benevolence

The President asked Brig Craig to present the report of the Benevolence Committee; he noted that benevolence expenditure had remained in the same area at £300k.

Brig Craig also advised the Council that the Benevolence Committee had recommended that the Weekly Allowance paid to deserving individuals over the age of 70 would be increased by 150% to bring us into line with other charities and also to ensure that the benefit we provided was providing the required level of benevolence relief and that overall it would increase the spending in this area by £80k and that this would require the approval of Council.

Phil Webb raised a concern that means testing would mean that the increase would not improve the situation for those beneficiaries who are in care homes as they are means tested and the increase would be taken into account. In response the Controller advised that as the allowance was an annuity that could be withdrawn at any time it was not included in the means test process.

The President thanked Brig Craig for his update and for the work of the Benevolence Committee.

ITEM 6.0 - To receive a report on Corps Affairs

The President invited the Corps Col to provide an update on Corps affairs, manning and operations as follows;

RHQ RE UPDATE (AFFAIRS – MANNING – OPERATIONS)

AFFAIRS

- Chief Royal Engineer duties handover will take place on Sat 15 Sep 18 at the CMW between Lt Gen Sir Mark Mans and Lt Gen Tyrone Urch.
- Sec InstRE will leave his post in late Sep – early Oct 18 on retirement. A replacement will follow.
- The RE Museum continues to thrive with very buyout footfall. The VC exhibition is highly recommended; do visit.
- The CAMUS Regular Band has now departed Chatham and will merge with the CAMUS delivered RA and AAC bands to deliver a Type 54 band. It will be based in Tidworth; the name is tbc. The RE Reserve Band remains in place in Nottingham.
- The RE Games in Kinloss (home of 39ER) was very successful. c1200 Sappers attended. The REA is thanked for sponsoring the prizes. The next games will be in Wyton, near Cambridge (home of 42ER). The date will be promulgated shortly.
- RHQ RE now has a Hd of Communications – Mrs Michelle Wallington. Michelle will work with all elements of RHQ RE/HQ RE to deliver and amplify the Corps brand, positive messages, in an effective and efficient manner.

MANNING

- Regular officer manning – very good. Outflow is not a concern. RMAS is full and the Corps continues to attract high quality Tp Comds (c70 a year).
- Regular solder manning – this is a major concern; the Corps is c500 soldiers short against a trained strength of c6500. Inflow (recruiting) is well below target, and it will take c18 months to really turn the inflow position around. Comd HC is leading on solving the problem. Manning the Army is a high priority for CGS. Retention however is improving and internal transfers to the Corps is very buyout.
- Additionally the Corps will see growth as 28ER and 23 Amph Sqn (Germany based) form up and grow in 2019+. This will create more pressure on the current manning over the period 2019 – 2021.
- Reserve officer and soldier manning is good.

OPERATIONS

- 8X is committed to 31 operations in 29 countries (as at 28 Aug 18).
- 1395 service personnel are deployed on operations/committed overseas and UK.
- Significant numbers (Squadron level) are in:
 - Falkland Islands.

- Estonia.
- Iraq.
- South Sudan (UN).
- Mali.

Corps Col RE

06 Sep 18

Brig Bazeley pointed out that each individual whether they be serving or veteran could play a positive role in recruiting by word of mouth as everyone knows an individual of a suitable age who perhaps could be encouraged to think about joining the Corps. The President recommended that this type of initiative should be considered by the Recruiting committee.

Action: Controller/Recruiting Committee

The President thanked the Corps Col for his very comprehensive presentation.

ITEM 7.0 - To note the Minutes of the 120th REA Finance Committee and to consider and approve the following:

The President asked the Corps Treasurer to present the recommendations from the Finance Committee requiring Council attention.

The Corps Treasurer advised that the Finance Committee had agreed to establish a working group to recommend proposals for the proposed reduction in the REA reserves from circa £11million to circa £9million over the next five years and that they would expect to report to the Council at the May meeting with their recommendations.

Action: Controller, Finance Committee by 01 May 2019

The Corps Treasurer gave the details of the proposed increase in the weekly grant for approval by the Council. The total annual weekly grant would be raised by 150% rising from £73k to £181.5k grants for living at home and care would rise from £20 to £50 and £17 to £42.50 respectively.

It was identified that this should be reviewed annually.

Proposer: Mr Phil Gill
 Seconded: Col Matt Quare

Action: Controller, Corps Treasurer 01 Jan 2019

A request for annual grant not exceeding £4.5k for the provision of the Trophies for the Sapper Games has been made to the Finance Committee. It was highlighted that the Sapper Games presents an excellent opportunity for a positive reinforcement of the REA brand and services to the wider Corps and that with a strong presence at the Games this would serve the Association well. It was agreed that this commitment should be accepted.

Proposer: John Bell

Secunder: Larry Inge

Brig Bazeley questioned the representation of the REA at the Games highlighting the issue the REA were not in attendance and that this would be significant opportunity to further demonstrate the role of the REA to the Corps. It was suggested that the REA should be included in future games and how they are involved should be considered and this may involve everything from a Pop-up stand to teams competing.

Action: Management Committee Jan 2019

Council was requested to approve an annual £6k for the Annual RE Awards dinner taking place on 28 November, the REA will have a number of places at the dinner and this is once again a great opportunity to showcase and strengthen the REA brand to a wider audience. The awards are for excellence in Military Engineering and cross all ranks of the Corps.

Proposer: Eric Hargreaves
Secunder: Martin Heffer

The status of the Marne Pavilion Welfare Grant was raised currently the grant has been extended until 21 December 2018 and work continues in preparation for the build, however there are significant issues to be overcome before a contract can be committed and this will continue to be monitored by the Finance committee.

The President thanked the Corps Treasurer and Honorary Treasurer for the presentation of the reports and for their work in maintaining the strong financial governance of the Association.

ITEM 8.0 - Update on 2018 Budget (FOO) and Valuation of REA (AFCIF) Investment

The Corps Treasurer drew the attention of the Council to the 2018 FOO and the Investment Fund showing that our investments remained positive.

The key items on the budget were the increase in the weekly grant budget, the Welfare Fund, Sapper Games and Annual Awards Dinner.

The REVET grant is due to complete in 2019, they have not as yet submitted a request for a continuation of the grant, however this was expected in the near future.

The Controller suggested that the budget for Benevolence should remain at £300k, as it gave the impression of a reduction to anyone outside the Council of a cut in Benevolence. Brig Craig pointed out that there was no limit on benevolence and that the budget was a guide and that should there be a greater demand this would be brought to Councils attention for an increase in the budget to meet demand should this occur.

It was agreed that the budget should remain at £300k

The council approved the budget for 2019 and forecast to 2023 subject to minor amendment.

Action: Corps Treasurer. Sep 2018

ITEM 9.0 - REA Welfare Fund Sitrep

The President asked the Controller to update the Council on the Current Welfare Grant
It was explained that the calling notice had gone out to all units and some bids have already been received. A further awareness campaign would be taking place over the coming weeks to ensure that the reach was maximised and REA HQ would be happy to assist in ensuring bids were checked before submission to the Finance Committee.

The Corps col requested that the Calling notice be distributed with the minutes of the Council meeting.

Action: Controller/ finance Committee Dec 2018

ITEM 10.0 - Proposed Group structure and affiliations 2019

The President introduced the Proposed Group Structure and explained that it had been the intention of the Council for some time to revise the affiliation of the groups and to increase the involvement of regiments with the REA.

The President requested that the Controller explain the proposed affiliation structure to the Council. The controller explained that following the previous direction of Council to improve the engagement of regular units with the REA he was proposing a new group structure that reduced the size of the groups, and increased the number of units directly involved with the REA. He further explained that

there were no correct/easy fixes given the geographical spread of units and branches and that some compromises would have to be accepted. Questions were raised regarding the command structure and cascading information through the Groups and Branches and the President explained that the proposed new structure of Council and Committees would be such that strong information flows would be maintained.

After considerable discussion and some amendments to the proposed structure it was agreed that the proposed changes should be circulated to 8 Engr Bde, Regts, REA Groups and branches and then confirmed at the next Council meeting on 01 May 2018.

The President asked that the Controller to present the proposed affiliations at the AGM in October and to arrange a Map displaying the Group Locations.

The President asked the Controller to explore the funding requirements for the proposed new affiliations and circulate a proposal to Council.

Action: Controller ongoing for completion by 01 May 19

ITEM 11.0 - Proposed Amendments to Association Rules 2018

The President requested that the controller present the proposed changes to the Association on a line by line basis. In principle the amendments were accepted subject to a number of drafting issues that were raised by council members, the President directed the Controller to amend and distribute to the Council members.

The council accepts the proposed amendments to the Association Rules subject to the agreed changes discussed.

Proposer: Bob Prosser
Secunder: Larry Inge

Action: Controller by 10 October 2018

ITEM 12.0 - Brief on progress with QGEA merger/cooperation

The President explained that he had discussed a new membership category Royal Engineer Association (Ghurkha) member with the QGEA. He explained that the membership would entitle QGE to all the normal benefits of the Association, the administrative support and services. This would be the same up to the point of benevolence funding which in the case of the Ghurkha member would be directed to the Ghurkha Welfare funds and their rules.

It was felt that a clear statement should be drafted to that fully defines and explains the services to be provided, the administration and the structure of benevolence funding that is available.

Subject to appropriate re-wording it was proposed that the Association proceed with the launch of joint REA/Ghurkha category of Membership.

Proposer: Matt Quare
Second: Larry Inge

Action President/Controller 01 May 2019

ITEM 13.0 Proposed Restructure of REA Council 2019

The President introduced the proposed restructure of the Council, explaining that the Council, at 21 trustees was larger than the charities of similar size which tend to have 12 trustees. This would mean revising the make-up of the Council the President proposed a council of 8 Veterans, 2 Serving and two Non-Execs.

There was general agreement with the proposal provided that the cascade of information through the Association was maintained. There was discussion over the representation of Groups and how this could be rotated/allocated in future.

The President felt that having gained a general approval of the proposal encompassing the changes that a fully detailed proposal showing the detailed structure of the Council, and all other committees. It was also proposed that the changes should be ready for implementation following the Council meeting on 01 May 2018.

Action: Controller ongoing by 01 May 2019

ITEM 14.0 Restructure of REA Committees – Management and Recruitment 2019

It was agreed that the Management and Recruitment Committees would continue to report to the Council and would be chaired by the Controller. The Controller is to produce a proposal for the membership of each of the Committees following the decision to restructure the Council and the New Group Structure.

Action: Controller ongoing, completion by 01 May 2019

ITEM 15.0 Development at the NMA

The Controller advised the Committee of the progress on the NMA, following the completion of the construction works adjacent to the RE Memorial work would begin to install the new pathway, the Obelisk, signage and re-planting which should all be complete this year ready for an official re-opening in late spring. He also confirmed that all routine maintenance had now been transferred from REA volunteers to the NMA contractors.

ITEM 16.0 - Any Other Business

The President drew the attention of the Council to the Trustee Questionnaires at the back of the Council papers and asked them to study these and to consider how they could prepare guidance for the new board in the future.

Action: All Trustees by 01 May 2019

The President proposed that we should have a Trustee training session following the next Council meeting.

Action: Action Corps Treasurer 01 May 2019

The President thanked the Council members for their participation in the meeting.

ITEM 17.0 - Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the REA Council will be on 01 May 2019 it is proposed to hold this meeting at the Royal Hospital Chelsea.