

# The Royal Engineers Association

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**Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN**



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See Distribution

29 January 2019

## **MINUTES OF THE 130<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD IN THE RED ROOM, CHETWYND BARRACKS, CHILWELL, ON THURSDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019**

### **PRESENT**

Mr Kenneth Kirk	REA Controller – Chairman
WO1 (RSM) K R Rank	1 RSME Regt
WO1 (RSM) T Hough	170 (Infra Sp) Engr Gp
WO1 (RSM) S Allen	170 (Infra Sp) Engr Gp
Mr M Payne BEM	Central Southern Group
Mr T Webb	South Wales Group
Mr D Ormsby	East Anglia Group
Mr G Doughty	South East Group
Mr R Tootle	Scotland & NI Group
Mr K Gover	South West Group
Mr S Lipscombe	North Midlands Group
Lt Col P Taylor	Airborne Engineers Branch

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Maj (Retd) I Sidebottom	Corps Treasurer
Maj (Retd) IL George	Assistant Controller and Secretary

### **APOLOGIES**

Col M Quare MBE	Corps Colonel
Lt Col M Heffer RE TD	Reserve Officer
WO1 (RSM) D Jones	3 RSME Regt
Mr W P Halloran	North East Group
Maj J Walker RE	Serving Officer
Mr A Bulmer TD	North West Group
Mr K Street	South Midlands Group
Mr J Allerhead	London Group

1. The Controller opened the meeting and welcomed those present, especially those who had come from afar. He extended season's greetings to all assembled.

2. The Controller noted that apologies had been received from those listed above. He welcomed the following new members to the Committee for whom it was their first meeting:

WO1 (RSM) T Hough

170 (Infra Sp) Engr Group

#### **ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 129<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

3. The Committee accepted that the Minutes of the 129th Meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

#### **ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 129<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

4. Item 6: Kitchener Fund. The Controller discussed the Kitchener Fund, which included the changes that were made and the new criteria that is in place.

#### **ITEM 3 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE**

5. The Controller presented the Benevolence Report for the 12 month period ending December 2018.

6. The Controller gave an update on Benevolence and discussed the following areas:

- Over the same period last year the numbers of cases were up by 4% and the expenditure is up £16,627. The Budget for 2019 will stay at £300,000.
- There have been more complex cases which have required considerable support and attention.
- The Controller also discussed the Benevolence process and how he wanted to ensure that all serving soldiers and veterans are aware of who is available to assist and where the money comes from. He has presented to the RSM's course recently as they are the best placed in the Regiments to pass on this information.
- The Controller discussed the new Benevolence project that will start later on in the year. This will ring fence Benevolence funds for larger projects and improve the Benevolence outreach.

7. The Benevolence Committee report was accepted. The report is at Annex A.

#### **ITEM 4 - TO NOTE THE CORPS COLONEL'S REPORT ON THE CORPS**

8. The Controller gave the Corps Colonel's Report on the Corps. RSM, 1 RSME Regt attended a Commander Land Forces meeting last week and was able to update the committee on the current situation with Army recruiting.

9. The report is at Annex B.

#### **ITEM 5 – THE BADGE OF MERIT AWARDS 2019**

10. The Controller explained that nominations are received at HQ REA and considered by an Awards Board in the January 2019 and considered the ten submitted nominations. Of the ten nominations, seven were selected to receive the award.

11. The Committee took great pleasure in awarding the prestigious REA Badge of Merit to the following members:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Branch</b>	<b>Group</b>
Mr Mark Stevens	Solent and District Branch	Central Southern Group
Mr Cyril Wroe	Blackpool Branch	North West Group

Mr Jack Noble	Gibraltar Branch	HQ and Overseas
Mr George Simpson	Dundee Branch	Scotland and NI Group
Mr Geoff Keefe	Southampton Branch	South West Group
Mr James Johnstone	Doncaster Branch	North Midlands Group
Mr Tony Webb	Malvern and District Branch	South Wales Group

12. Their commitment to the Association and their comrades was remarkable and worthy of recognition through the award. The Controller will notify award winners officially.

The Committee agreed to the REA Badge of Merit nominations.

**Proposed:** Mr M Payne – Central Southern Group

**Seconded:** Mr G Doughty – South Eastern Group

**Carried**

#### **ITEM 6- BRANCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY-UPDATE**

13. The Controller briefed the members on the submission of Branch Financial Summaries, which he had received so far for the FY 2018. The Controller said he was pleased with the accuracy and timely submission of most Branch Financial Summaries and the success of Branch Audit submissions. However, there were still about 50% of Branches needing to send back their Financial Summaries. He asked that Group representatives take the message back to Branches that the Financial Summaries need to be on time and correct. The Controller is looking at making the form an on line document which will be easier to complete. The Controller also mentioned the Branch Annual returns that also arrive late and emphasised that there are only two documents for branches to complete yearly and these needs to be completed properly.

#### **ITEM 7 – REVISION OF REA RULES**

14. The Controller discussed the situation with the revision of REA rules; the rules have been revised for 2019 and will be published on the website. The rules will continue to be developed and amended to meet the needs of the Association members going forward. Amendments to be approved by Council.

#### **ITEM 8 – REA STRATEGY**

15. The Controller explained the new REA Strategy and covered the following:

- The restructure of the REA Council membership with the number of trustees being reduced and external non –exec trustees being recruited to strengthen the governance of the Association.
- Modifying the existing branch affiliations to connect more Corps Regiments to the REA.
- Developing our recruitment and communication efforts to reach more individuals and spread a greater understanding of the REA among serving soldiers and veterans
- The aim is to ensure the Association continues to evolve to meet the needs of the members and reach out serving soldiers, veterans and dependents

#### **ITEM 9 – NEW WELFARE GRANT**

16. The Controller explained the new welfare grant procedures and the following points were discussed:

- The new welfare grant of £250,000 has been allocated with a proposal to continue as an annual grant for 3 years. The bids in by the end of the year and money available from the middle of 2019.
- The information on the grant has been distributed to all CO's and REA Branches.

- Members discussed what could be bid for which included, gazebo, minibus, etc. The Controller emphasised that Groups and Branches needed to be aware of the objects of the charity before bidding and do you have a need, if not there is no need to apply.

## ITEM 10– TO NOTE THE ALLOCATION OF GRANTS TO ANNUAL EVENTS

17. Grant requests were received for the following events in 2019:

Event (a)	Requested Amount (b)	Amount Supported by HQ REA (c)
CM & Vets Weekend - Chatham	£8,500 (£8,500 in 2018)	£8,500
Minley Weekend	£7,500 (£7,500 in 2018)	£7,500
Chilwell Weekend	£8,500 (£8,500 in 2018)	£8,500
Gibraltar Weekend	£3,000 (£00.00 in 2018)	£3,000

18. The Controller discussed the amounts allocated for the Corps Annual Events and told the Committee that HQ REA supported the £3,000 for the Gibraltar Weekend.

19. Committee members have been asked to note the requests. The Committee recommends to REA Finance Committee and Council at their next meetings.

## ITEM 11 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20. 2019 Diary of events. The REA Diary of events for 2019 was given to all Committee members. If there are any queries about any of the activities then contact HQ REA.

21. National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) Project. The Controller explained in depth about the rededication ceremony at the NMA on the 28 May 2019. This event is at the early stages of planning and once the day's activities have been confirmed, the Controller will write to the Branches.

22. Mr Street Annual Group Funding Allocation. As Mr Street was not available for the meeting the Controller discussed the Funding Allocation to Groups and that with the changes to the Groups on the 1 May 2019 the funding will be reviewed.

23. Assistant Controller Travel claims. The Assistant Controller explain that he will be carrying out a review of Travel claims as there had been some over spend this year. Clear direction is required and this will be in line with the MoD rules and included in the REA rules.

24. Graham Doughty. Mr Doughty discussed his concern that some branches did not use all of the money raised for a Charity has gone to that Charity. The Corps Treasurer and Controller discussed this matter and decided that the Controller would inform branches that all charity money collected would go to that charity.

25. Diving Branch. The Controller informed the committee that a Diving Branch has now been formed and has currently 51 members. The Controller discussed the procedure that was taken to form the branch and that the Committee had to now ratify the process.

**Proposed:** Mr T Webb – South Wales Group

**Seconded:** Mr D Ormsby – East Anglia Group

**Carried**

26. Re-election of Committee Members. The Assistant Controller explain that the following members of the committee are coming to the end of their tenure.

- The following will not be eligible for re-election: G Doughty, M Payne and W Halloran.
- The following are eligible for re-election: K Street, S Lipscombe and Alan Bulmer.
- HQ REA will write to Group Directors to confirm the process for electing and re-electing Management Committee members.

27. Mr Payne. Mr Payne discussed that he was disappointed that he could not book a room at the Victory Services Club for the Annual Dinner, as it was fully booked. It was explained that there should be enough rooms if you book early.

#### **ITEM 12. – POINTS FROM THE MEMBERS.**

25. The Controller asked for any final points from the Committee and the following was covered.

- Various members asked if there would be accommodation for the next meeting at Chatham and the Assistant Controller said he would look into this.
- As this would be the last meeting for WO1 (RSM) K R Rank and WO1 (RSM) S Allen, the controller thanked them for all their support to the management committee.

#### **ITEM 13. - DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

26. The date and location of the next meeting is scheduled for 1230hrs 11 July 2019 and held at the Field Marshall Room, RE Museum, Chatham.

19 January 2019

Assistant Controller

Minutes Approved

Dated

Chairman

Distribution:

Management Committee Members  
 Council Members  
 Group Directors  
 Deputy Group Directors  
 Group Secretaries  
 Branch Secretaries  
 Controller REA  
 Corps Treasurer

**Benevolence Report to the REA Management Committee  
January 2019**

1. **Trends 2018.** For the period 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2018 the number of benevolence cases submitted to the Association by SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and other organisations was 553, this is 8 cases more than for 2017 (545 cases). Of these 553 cases, 361 were submitted by SSAFA and 135 by TRBL; these figures are comparable to the same period in 2017.

2. **Individual Benevolence Cases Considered during 2018 – 2015 (Excludes Weekly Allowances and Christmas Grants)**

Category	2018	2017	2016	2015
Disabled & Illness	166	163	174	175
Aged	41	32	53	71
Widows	63	51	55	86
Unemployed	128	119	107	118
Miscellaneous	124	129	136	149
Grants not made	31	51	40	51
<b>Totals</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>650</b>

Regular – Reserve Case Comparisons	2018	2017	2016	2015
Regular Cases	464	450	540	605
Reservist Cases	58	44	27	45
Regular Grants	£261,987	£255,169	£260,925	£282,412
Reservist Grants	£26,423	£16,614	£10,145	£20,318

3. **Cost of Benevolence Cases Jan to Dec 2018.** The unaudited amount spent on benevolence cases for the period 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2018 was £288,410. This is £16,627 more than the same period in 2017. There was significant growth in reservist grants with an increase of 38% over the previous year with the number of reservist cases rising by 30% over the previous year. It has been agreed to maintain the Benevolence budget at £300,000 for 2019.

4. **Benevolence Committee meetings**

The benevolence committee met on three occasions in the past year, during these meetings a number of observers are invited from Units across the Corps this gives the opportunity for serving soldiers of all ranks to see the work of the REA and to contribute to the discussion regarding benevolence grants. There continues to be no limit to the level of an individual grant these are assessed on the basis of the individual need. Provided the information supplied by the caseworker is complete then decisions on grants can be made quickly and processed within a week. The out of committee procedure are now well established and grant requests that exceed the Controllers authorised limit of £1000 can be quickly circulated to the members of the benevolence committee and decisions made.

5. **Grants to Charities.** At the last meeting of Council, the trustees agreed that with effect from 2018, the grant to ABF would be increased from £40k to £50k, the grant to SSAFA would be increased from £15k to £20k. A grant of £3000 was paid to Veterans in Action to assist with an expedition in which several sapper veterans took part in.

RHQRE/4/1/10/1

04 Jan 19

## **REA Management Cttee**

### **RHQ RE UPDATE – January 2019**

1. **Corps Commitments.** The tempo remains very busy with 2127 PERS on UK or Overseas Ops or Commitments. In 2018 the Corps deployed on 35 Ops across 29 countries. The Reserves continue to deploy PERS in Support of the Regulars. Key deployments (mass) are: Op TRENTON (S.Sudan) (175); Project ANEMOI (FI) (189); SHADER (Iraq) (87); TORAL (Afghanistan) (46) Corps manning is in deficit; c545 soldiers and c6 officers. Soldier manning should be 6431 v 5886; the pain is felt at Cpl – LCpl level. I judge Corps engagement activities are very strong, and when coupled with inflow initiatives (The Army Manning Campaign), Fd Army retention initiatives, we should expect to see an upturn in Corps manning in c2-3 years. Concurrently the Corps is looking at options to expand the numbers of QGE soldiers to aid full manning.
2. **Army 2020.** Structural change continues to take place. 35 Engr Regt is now an EOD&S Regt based in Wimbish. The final elements of RE in Germany will depart Paderborn in Summer 19, however 23 Amp Sqn will form (c130 pax) in Minden in Summer 2019. 28 Engr Regt (C-CBRN) starts to form at RAF Honnington and Woodbridge in Apr 19. The Corps continue to wait for direction with regards to the future location of 36 Engr Regt. The move of 21 Engr Regt to Catterick from Ripon is currently in a “pause” phase, however building work in Catterick (Marne Barracks) is now moving forward quickly.
3. **Communications.** RHQ RE now has a dedicated Head of Communications as we drive to exploit all forms of communication and amplify all the good work the “whole corps” conducts. We all have a part to play and must ensure that key messages reach every corner of the world where there is a future, serving or retired Sapper – “One Tribe”.
4. **Events – 2019.** Key events of interest:
  - 11 May 19 – Corps Dinner Night @ Chatham.
  - 28 May 19 – NMA Event (see below).
  - 10 to 13 Jun 19 – Sapper Games @ Wyton (42 Engr Regt) – exact dates to follow.
  - 13 to 15 Sep 19 – CMW @ Chatham.
  - 28 Nov 19 – RE Awards Dinner @ ICE London (see below).
5. **Year of Engineering 18.** The Corps contribution to this national initiative was significant, capped with a successfully closing event @ Chatham in mid Nov 18. Again, the Corps reputation has been enhanced by the forward leaning approach take.
6. **RE Awards Dinner.** Delivered very successfully in London @ ICE in late Nov 18. TY to the REA for their Fin support. The feedback has been very positive. 28 Nov 19 is the provisional date for 2019 @ ICE London.
7. **NMA Project.** The project remains on track, all the new works at the NMA are complete (at nil cost). The new Obelisk is also complete, and looks fantastic. A formal rededication ceremony will take place at the NMA on 28 May 19.

## **Corps Col RE**