

The Royal Engineers Association

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Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



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

30 May 2019

THE MINUTES OF 74th MEETING OF ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL HELD IN HELD IN ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA, LONDON ON Wednesday 01 May 2019

PRESENT

Maj Gen Alistair S Dickinson CBE	President REA
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
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

IN ATTENDANCE

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

APOLOGIES

Brig (Retd) Andy S Craig OBE
Col (Retd) Chris M Davies MBE

Chairman REA
REA Hon Treasurer

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 Garrie Owens declared a potential conflict of interest regarding Education Apprenticeships.

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 73rd 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 73rd 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 73rd Meeting of Council

Item 3.0 Animations: the two that have been completed were shown to the council, it was requested that we develop some analysis of the success of our social media out reach. It was suggested SCRUM/Google/Facebook analytics could be used.

Action Controller 30 Sep 2019

Item 7.0 REA attendance at the Sapper Games – Cambridge Branch to Attend. Corps Col and Corps SM explained the program of events and the importance of an REA 11/12 June 2019. Brian Simm indicated the Cambridge branch would be willing to man a stand. Peter Luscombe asked if REA members had been identified to assist with the Prize giving or if there would in future would be the ability for participation in events. It was identified that there were MOD governance issues in veterans

Action Cambridge Branch June 2019

ITEM 4.0 - To take note of the proceedings of the 130th meeting of the Management Committee

The President emphasised the key role of the management committee in representing the views of the branch network to the Council. Key points identified as Badge of Merit presentations to take place at the NMA and the grant to the Gibraltar Weekend being classified as a National event and in receipt of £3000.00 Grant.

ITEM 5.0 - To note the Report on Benevolence

The Assistant Controller presented the Benevolence Report to the Council; this had previously been circulated to all council members.
It was identified that Trustees would be welcome to attend any Benevolence Committee meetings.

ITEM 6.0 - To receive a report on Corps Affairs

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

RHQ RE UPDATE (AFFAIRS – Operating – OPERATIONS)

- The Corps Col drew the meetings attention to the Report, which had previously been circulated, to all trustees. The President drew attention to the service of veterans to the Corps and the resource available from this group in the wider community.
- The Corps Col identified that the Corps working at near capacity, recruiting is at 60% however, the Corps remains an attractive option for recruits.
- Transfer in from other Corps is a strong feature of Corps recruiting
- Corps has 4 x 3 Star Generals and the Commandant RMAS
- REA have funded the first years' operating costs for the new Wi-Fi system in the Museum
- Central Comms hub is being planned for RHQ RE funded by all of the Corps Charities.
- Corps Memorial Day will be one day only however the veterans weekend will remain as a full weekend event.
- RE Awards Dinner will be on 28 November 2019

Following the Corps Cols point on the Comms Hub Bob Prosser was looking to bring in a standard emails for Branch officials to enable easier to contact individual branches.

Action: Controller Dec 19

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

ITEM 7.0 - To note the Minutes of the 119st REA Finance Committee and to consider and approve the following:

The Corps Treasurer presented the TAR for the year ending 31 December 2018, which had previously been circulated to all Trustees.

- a. The Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements
- b. Note the Letter of Representation
- c. Note the key audit findings extract

Extract of the Audit not adjustments or misstatements for the REA, the only findings were minor resulting from three branch returns being incorrectly completed or not returned.

The Corps Treasurer drew attention to the fall in the investment returns wiping out the income for the year, despite this the Association accounts remain in good health.

The President asked if the recent fall in our investment returns should lead the committee to reconsider the decision to reduce our reserves by up to £2million. The Corps Treasurer felt that this should not be the case as we take careful advice from Black Rock. The Corps treasurer advised that there was no requirement from the Charity Commission to reduce our reserves, and that this had been a proposal from the finance committee. Work is to continue by the Controller to review opportunities for sustainable investment in welfare projects. Lt Col Heffer commented that it was the correct process to assess carefully any opportunities and understand the effect on the fund of reducing the capital reserves.

Action Controller Sep 2019

The Treasurer drew the Committees attention to the Letter of Representation and the committee noted this.

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

The Corps Treasurer explained the Valuation of the REA fund pointing out the movement in the fund since December 2018

December 2018	£10,600,000
March 2019	£11,381,000
May 2019	£11,650,000

Action: Corps Treasurer. Sep 2019

ITEM 9.0 - REA Welfare Fund Sitrep

Welfare fund of £250,000 will close for applications on 15 August 2019 to date we have approved to date £104,000 and it is hoped that we will achieve the full grant allocation by September. The Controller drew attention to the wide range of grants that have been given ranging from Campervans to the Amazon Bridge monument at Monte Casino. The benefit of the welfare grant will be widely publicised with all recipients expected to submit articles to the Sapper magazine and to use social media to communicate the grant receipt.

It was also advised that in future applicants would be directed to seek additional funding from other sources to supplement their applications.

The Wimbish Sports Facilities project was granted in 2017 and remains to be started, there have been a number of administrative delays to starting the project, however there now appears to be a clear timescale to starting and completing this project which will be a great asset the RE Units stationed there.

Martin Heffer pointed out that we have learnt three important lessons on major capital projects

- a. Projects that appear straight forward can be increasingly complex when outside agencies are involve
- b. Monitoring the progress of the project and understanding the priority of the project delivery
- c. Do not release funds prior to confirmation of the Project start date

The finance committee should set cut-off date for the start of the Wimbish project and advise the unit of this.

Action: Controller/ finance Committee Sep 2019

ITEM 10.0 - Reserves Working Group

The Controller reminded the Council that the Reserve Working Group had been established to look at how we could utilise more of our reserves in the delivery of sustainable benevolence for the benefit of serving soldiers, veterans and families. Following a number of meetings, we have looked at homelessness, mental health, RBLI, partnership working and listened to various opinions. The main result of the review so far has been that the only effective way to increase our reach would be to collaborate with other effective delivery organisations.

The President commented that our role is in the signposting and intelligence gathering area where we and gaining a deep understanding of the effectiveness of the partners we engage with. Lt Col Heffer noted that the third sector picks up the gap between what the system MOD/NHS/State. The Corps SM highlighted that with the introduction of OP Smart to support Mental Health issues within the Army we should ensure that nothing we do conflicts with that initiative. Peter Luscombe and Garry Owens both commented on the requirement to research carefully any partner organisations and that we need to

carefully communicate with our membership and the wider Sapper Family how any support that we do provide.

The Controller pointed out that as members of Cobseo provide an umbrella organisation

The controller agreed to have a proposal ready for consideration by the Council for the September meeting.

Action Controller by 01 September 2019

ITEM 11.0 - To approve amendment to REA Rules to allow QGEA members to join REA

The committee agreed the amendment to the REA rules.

Proposer **Larry Inge**
Secunder **Bob Prosser**

ITEM 13.0 - Group and Branch Affiliation

The Controller explained that following consultation the Group and Branch affiliation has been finalised and presented the proposed affiliation list for consideration.

The President proposed the development of themed branches there was considerable discussion.

Bob Prosser proposed that 32 and 21 Engr Regt should swap the proposed allocation and that this should remain in the event of any future move of the Regiments

Peter Luscombe requested that in conjunction with the changes to the Affiliation the structure of the management committee should be reviewed.

Action: Controller/Luscombe Sep 2019

The changes will be communicated to the Group Secretaries for dissemination, and then published on the REA website.

The committee approved the Changes to the Group and Branch Affiliations

Proposer **Phil Gill**
Secunder **Corps Col**

Action Controller Sep 2019

ITEM 13.0 Proposed Restructure of REA Council 2019

The President introduced the proposed restructure of the REA Council, explaining that we had previously agreed to professionalise the Council and reduce the size of the Council. The restructure would see the Council take the following shape:

President (Trustee)

Representatives of each of the Committees :

Finance – Honorary Treasurer (Trustee)
Benevolence – Chairman (Trustee)
Management – Controller (attendee)

Serving

Corps Col (Trustee) for duration of appointment
Corps SM (Trustee) for duration of appointment
Group Director (Trustee) for duration of appointment

Group and Branch

National (Trustee) Elected
Themed (Trustee) Elected
Branch (Trustee) Elected

External Trustees

Governance (Trustee) Elected by Board
Service Charity Sector (Trustee) Elected by Board
Wider Community (Trustee) Elected by Board

Attendees

Corps Treasurer for duration of appointment
Secretary Controller for duration of appointment

The External Trustees would include a lead trustee who would report on the performance of the President as part of the Governance of the Association. The three trustees would cover the following areas

One with a knowledge of the wider community covering areas such as offenders, drug and alcohol abuse

One with a knowledge of Governance and the legislative requirements of the Charity

One with a knowledge of the operation of other service charities.

The President proposed the idea of themed branches representing areas such as Football, Motorcycling and other special interests as a way of increasing the membership and linking the serving Corps and recent service leavers to the Association by way of particular shared interests. The particular aim of this is to widen the antennae of the REA to enable them to reach more of our client base and improve our welfare and benevolence cover. Garry Owen pointed out that many of these organisations exist unofficially and unconnected with the serving community.

The President proposed that these organisations would receive an annual grant to fund events. He invited discussion from the trustees.

The Corps SM felt that this was the opportunity to break down barriers between the serving soldier and membership of the REA.

John Bell pointed felt that this would improve the camaraderie between the Association and the Serving Corps.

Peter Luscombe asked if the themed branches necessitated representation on the Council.

Garry Owens questioned the representation of the regions and branches on the new Council structure and that we need to communicate the relationship of the Council to the Association extremely carefully.

Lt Col Heffer highlighted how membership of the Association was changing, that the larger National Groups were doing well and potentially this could be at the expense of the local branches, and that this change needed to be reflected in the structure of the Council going forward.

Action Controller June 2019

ITEM 14.0 - Any Other Business

Martin Heffer and John Bell gave their apologies and had to leave the meeting.

As the meeting had over run and trustee, training had been booked for the afternoon it was agreed to re-convene the committee on 01 June 2019.

The President drew attention to the fact that this was Bob Prossers last Council meeting and thanked him for his excellent work and contribution to the Association and Council over many years. The President also thanked Steve Webster for his service on the Council as he left at the end of his term as Corps SM.

ITEM 15.0 - Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the REA Council will be on 01 June 2019 it is proposed to hold this meeting at the RE Museum in Brompton.