

# 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

12 July 2019

**THE MINUTES OF THE 74TH (Extraordinary) MEETING OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWER MEETING ROOM, REA HQ, RAVELIN BUILDING, CHATHAM, KENT ON Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 at 1400.**

## PRESENT

Maj Gen Alistair S Dickinson CBE  
Col Matt Quare MBE ADC  
Lt Col (Retd) Larry Inge  
Maj (Retd) Phil Gill MBE JP  
Mr Eric Hargreaves  
Maj (Retd) P Luscombe  
Mr Bob E C Prosser BEM  
Maj (Retd) Phil Webb TD  
Lt Col (Retd) Adrian J Bunting  
Mr Brian Simm  
Mr Garrie Owens  
WO1 (CSM) Steve Webster

President REA  
Corps Colonel  
Retired Officer  
South West Group  
North West Group  
North Midlands Group  
North East Group  
London Group  
Central Southern Group  
East Anglia Group  
South East Group  
Corps SM

## IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Kenneth M Kirk  
Maj (Retd) Ian Sidebottom  
Maj (Retd) Iain George

Controller REA and Secretary  
Corps Treasurer  
Assistant Controller REA

## APOLOGIES

Col (Retd) Chris M Davies MBE  
Lt Col Martin Heffer RE TD  
WO2 (QMSI) Simon Tolley

REA Hon Treasurer  
Reserve Army Officer  
South Midlands Group

#### **ITEM 1.0 Declaration of conflicts of interest**

1.1 The President asked the trustees to declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest.

1.2 The President declared a potential conflict of interest regarding his membership of the Chief Royal's Committee (CRC) as it has a bearing on how the Council does its business.

1.3 The Corps Colonel, Col Matt Quare stated that he was the agent on behalf of the Chairman of the Corps Finance Committee with regard to the Comms Hub Funding Proposal as well as being a trustee on other committees. The Comms Hub will not be working for the Corps Colonel directly but the Chief of Staff will have a daily oversight if the proposal is taken forward.

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

**Item 4.0 was then discussed.**

#### **ITEM 2.0 Proposed re-structure of REA Council 2019**

2.1 The president reminded the Council that they met about nine months ago and discussed 'professionalising' the Council, creating trustees and bringing NEDS (Non-Executive Directors) on board to bring wider expertise to the Council. The previous meeting ran out of time to fully discuss the matter and hence it would be discussed today.

2.2 The Controller REA had put together a proposed structure for the new Board of Trustees which is shown at **FLAG B**:

2.3 The proposed re-structure is designed to look at how to make a leaner Council that can strategically deliver the changes as discussed previously by the Council, that we continue to be fit for purpose in the future and also to bring in a wider view that reflects society as it is now as well as the Corps as it changes. We need to keep a very close check on governance issues because it's extremely important. As member of the REA Council, you all have a specific legal responsibility for the organisation which is why training and refresher training was undertaken. To ensure that we have a system that delivers within this, the proposals for re-structure have been put together. To clarify, the Controller, Asst Controller and Corps Treasurer are attendees of the Council and not trustees. The Controller is also the secretary for the Council.

2.4 Points to note for the new proposed structure: President, Chair and Hon Treasurer are all veterans. The Chair is also the Chair for the Benevolence Committee and the Hon Treasurer chairs the Finance Committee. Corps SM is due to change in July 2019 and is the link to the younger soldiers view, it was also suggested that the Res Army Officer (the only nominated position) have a term of 6 years input. The Group Director is a new position and will probably be a command appointment within the RE. The idea is to get all different parts of the organisation represented. The Group rep will be selected from a branch. There followed a discussion about the difference between a National rep and a Themed rep – a National rep is a representative of a National Branch (usually made up of veterans only), the new Themed rep will be initially taken from the new Football branch (which will be made up of serving and ex serving people). This is subject to review.  
External Trustee – Governance – someone with legal experience/knowledge,  
External Trustee – Service Charity – so that we can benchmark against other service charities; someone who has an understanding of the wider service charity community.  
External Trustee – Wider Community – to give an understanding of the wider welfare issues affecting our members.  
The external trustee posts may be difficult to fill as they have to be found and willing to be on the Board.

Service Charity trustee – one of the other service charities such as RN or RAF? Could be any charity, not necessarily a service charity. External Charity trustee rather than Service Charity.

Diversity representation on the board.

External trustees to be interviewed by two Board members, conflicts of interest to be declared at interview. Word of mouth at this stage to source external trustees will suffice rather than a formal recruitment campaign.

2.5 The President asked for any comments on the structure.

Role of the Group rep – will be looking at a large number of groups? Will be representing the sorts of issues that come up at their level within the REA, they aren't within the chain of command. The REA Branch system will be represented at the Management Committee.

It was proposed that the Council confirm the acceptance of the new structure with effect 01 Sept 2019 and that in the interim a quorum of the trustees remained to provide the Governance structure for the Association.

This was agreed unanimously by all members of the Council

Proposer Bob Prosser

Secunder Larry Inge

Action Controller Jul 2019

### **ITEM 3.0 Welfare Grants**

The controller updated the Committee on the current level of Welfare grants that had been awarded in 2019 and advised that the grant application window would close on 15 Aug 2019.

### **ITEM 4.0 Comms Hub Funding Proposal**

4.1 The President asked that the Corps Colonel to pitch the proposal from the RECCT and CRC perspectives. The President also asked that the Corps Treasurer give some background on where the REA money goes at the moment and expand on how Corps funding is structured so that the Council had some facts on which to base their judgements.

4.2 The Corps Colonel reminded the Council that about 36 months ago, the CRC commissioned a DIG report linked into Corps marketing, communication and branding project run by General Keith Cima. This independent report stated that the Corps (the Sapper Family) has a good brand but the potential of the brand was not being maximised and what the Corps does is not being amplified. The social media profile was improved by the employment of John Hogan but it became clear that in this globalised world, communication is key and the Corps needed to get better at it. Trying to find all Sappers and utilise them when they are in industry.

Michelle Wallington was been employed as Head of Communications, concurrently Sapper magazine continues to run (Bev Kelly) with the Corps Secretary overseeing it. Changes have been made to Sapper magazine and the Corps has jumped on to the social media bandwagon. It is felt important to join together the elements of the Corps charities but keep independent (REA, Museum, Institute, RECCT and RE-CPD) in an efficient and effective way as one message. Corps Colonel referred to the Chief Royals Guidance which talks about the 'Sapper family' – that is who the Corps is trying to reach. At the last CRC, it was felt that a third person was needed within the hub to service and provide a facility to all of the Corps, going forward as one. What the service is yet to be defined and needs to be discussed – the charities need to come back and give a focus to that service. RECCT has been picking up all of the services, but the Day's Pay Scheme is in decline because of recruiting and retention. The charities (with the exception of the Museum at present) should pick up the cost of the Comms Hub between them and join up the 'silos'. (See table in **FLAG A** - how the costs are divided up between the charities is also up for discussion)

4.3 The President asked the Corps Treasurer, Maj (Retd) Ian Sidebottom to give an overview of the Corps finances:

Corps Treasurer – Four sources of income –Day’s Pay Scheme, Sappers Shop, investments (which are doing quite well despite the current markets) and more recently, RECCT has purchased three houses on the new Kitchener Barracks development; tenants should be in by the end of June 2019, generating rental income.

Day’s Pay Scheme income and distribution – annually brings in just over £1 million, recruitment and retention in the Corps impacts on this income.

Regular soldiers/Cpls donate 120% of a day’s basic pay, Sgts/WO1 125%. 50% goes to REA/50% to RECCT.

Regular Officers 230% - 38.5% to RECCT, of which 50% to REA, 31.5% to Institution, 30% goes to the HQ Officers Mess.

Reserves – flat rate for all ranks – 12% of a basic day pay – 50% to REA/50% to RECCT.

2018 – REA and RECCT received £366,500

2017 – REA and RECCT received £375,000

2016 – REA and RECCT received £382,000

#### **Income and expenditure for REA:**

2018 Income (minus donated services £72,500) £1, 98,479

Spent on charitable objectives: £567,902 - 52%

Operating costs 19% (Staff costs £175,000)

Depreciation/ other operating costs 29%

Welfare Grants – not included in 2018.

The President stated that it was important to note how £26,000 scaled to overall income and costs.

*(The Corps Colonel had to leave the meeting at this point to conduct an interview.)*

4.4 Clarification that £26,000 p.a for the salary of the third person for the Comms Hub. Increase relates to salary uplift. Will not be outsourced.

- All four charities have to agree – CRC is very keen for this to happen.
- The contribution for the other three charities is for the proposed third person in the Comms Hub.
- How will success be measured? The REA Articles and objectives are about benevolence and esprit de Corps, if the communication operations works well then there will a better communication network for us.
- Will there be milestones? A fourth person may be required eventually? What will the REA actually get out of it? Need to define what our requirements/goals are for the Comms Hub.
- Discussion around split of contributions between the charities as REA provide a grant of £30,000 to REVETT.
- As Trustees, Is this proposal compatible with our objectives for the Sapper family?

The President referred to the text under the Comms Hub Financing table on the agenda as suggestions what the REA might want provided by the Comms Hub:

The Controller REA gave a comparison of REA Facebook page against five other organisations such as SSAFA. Even though the REA has a lower Facebook membership, when the content is good, such as the NMA event in May, our engagement is much higher and reaps other benefits.

Most of the ideas for communications come from the Recruiting Committee.

Does it meet our objectives? The President asked the Council to agree that the proposal met our objectives. It was agreed that it did.

What do we want out of it? It was suggested that the Controller REA uses the text above as our requirements with the Corps Colonel (ICA - an Inter-Company Agreement)

5 years seems a long time – 3 years seems more reasonable. Specific measureable outputs for REA from the Comms Hub team. Comms Hub member to attend Recruiting Committee and a report from the Head of Comms at every REA Council meeting.

**Vote taken in favour of agreeing the Comms Hub funding proposal – unanimously agreed.**

**Proposer – Eric Hargreaves  
Secunder - Phil Webb**

## **5.0 AOB**

The President closed the meeting by thanking all of the Trustees for the contributions to the board over many years and that he hoped those leaving the role as Trustees would continue to take an active role in the Association.

The President requested that the Controller advise of the date and location of the next Board meeting.

Action Controller Jul 19

## FLAG A – Comms Hub Funding Proposal

The REA has been asked to contribute towards the funding of the REHQ Comms Hub for the provision of enhanced Communications including Social Media, Website and Events.

Charity	2019 (in-year)	2020	2021	2022	2023
RECCT	£105,000	£58,250	£58,833	£59,421	£60,015
REA	£5,333	£26,250	£26,513	£26,778	£27,046
InstRE	£5,333	£26,250	£26,513	£26,778	£27,046
REVETT (RE CPD)	£5,333	£26,250	£26,513	£26,778	£27,046

- 1.0 Support with the REA Social Media – managing our Facebook output and contact with our members – Editing content, regular weekly postings, responding to members messages and requests, Monitoring other Sapper veteran sites and keeping us aware of what is happening, Managing our Twitter account, engaging with branches, promoting Local and National branch activities, promoting Sapper events, RE Museum, Service Charity Events etc. – to ensure that we maximise the engagement with the Association.
- 2.0 Assisting with preparation of new media content – for example the animation videos, we have produced this year with Senate Media.
- 3.0 Updating REA website ensuring increasing its visibility and relevance. Editing and posting event information.
- 4.0 Coverage of REA events to ensure they are widely promoted to increase participation and engagement.
- 5.0 Regular reviews with REA to ensure we are achieving aims – increased engagement through Social Media, with all of our intended audience Serving, Veterans, and Families.

## FLAG B - Proposed re-structure of REA Council 2019

The Existing Council to be dissolved and re-form as a Board of Trustees with the following structure:

President – Maj Gen AS Dickinson CBE	6-year term Sep 2023
Chair – Brig AR Craig OBE	6-year term Sep 2022
Hon Treasurer – Col CM Davies MBE	6-year term Nov 2020
Corps Col – Col M Quare MBE ADC	with appointment
Corps SM – WO1 S Webster	with appointment
Res Army Offr- Lt Col M Heffer	Nominated by President
Group Rep – Group Director	with appointment (rotating round Groups)
Group Rep –	3-year term (proposed by Groups)
National Rep -	3-year term (proposed by Groups)
Themed Rep-	3-year term
External trustee Governance	3 year term – (President /Controller select)
External Trustee Service Charity	3 year term – (President/Controller select)
External trustee Wider Community	3 year term – (President/Controller select)
Controller – K M Kirk (Secretary)	with appointment
Corps Treasurer - I Sidebottom	with appointment
Asst Cont - I George	with appointment