

# 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 822407  
Website: [www.reahq.org.uk](http://www.reahq.org.uk)  
Email: [info@reahq.org.uk](mailto:info@reahq.org.uk)

Reference: REA/A/1/2

See Distribution

24 July 2019

## **MINUTES OF THE 131<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD IN THE FIELD MARSHALL ROOM, RAVELIN BUILDING BROMPTON BARRACKS, CHATHAM, ON THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> JULY 2019**

### **PRESENT**

Mr Kenneth Kirk	REA Controller – Chairman
Col M Quare MBE	Corps Colonel
Lt Col M Heffer RE TD	Reserve Officer
WO1 (RSM) B Tulett	1 RSME Regt
WO1 (RSM) T Hough	170 (Infra Sp) Engr Gp
WO1 (RSM) D Jones	3 RSME Regt
Mr G Doughty	South East Group
Mr D Bardsley	South East Group
Mr M Payne BEM	Central Southern Group
Mr D Pinder	Central Southern Group
Mr T Webb	South Wales Group
Mr D Ormsby	East Anglia Group
Mr K Street	South Midlands Group
Mr R Tootle	Scotland & NI Group

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Maj (Retd) I Sidebottom	Corps Treasurer
Maj (Retd) IL George	Assistant Controller and Secretary
Mr A Phillips	South Midlands Group

### **APOLOGIES**

WO1 (RSM) P Clark	CSM
Mr W P Halloran	North East Group
Mr A Bulmer TD	North West Group
Mr J Allerhead	London Group
Mr S Lipscombe	North Midlands Group
Mr K Gover	South West Group
Lt Col P Taylor	Airborne Engineers Branch

1. The Controller opened the meeting and welcomed those present, especially those who had come from afar.

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) B Tulett	1 RSME Regt
Mr D Bardsley	South East Group
Mr D Pinder	Central Southern Group
Mr A Phillips	South Midlands Group

3. The Controller then briefed the committee on the following points:

- The aim of the Management Committee
- The New board Structure
- New National Branches – Diving Branch
- New Themed Branches – Football and Cycling
- Very successful National events which included Gibraltar, NMA rededication service, Chilwell weekend and to come Minley and Chatham weekend, AGM& annual dinner, Sapper Sunday, Field of Remembrance and Remembrance Day
- New Communications Support in RHQ
- Welfare Grants
- Increased funding to Groups
- Awards – Chief Royal Commendation, BoM, Corps History, Hart Jackson and Awards Dinner

#### **ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 130<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

4. The Committee accepted that the Minutes of the 130th Meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

#### **ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 130<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

5. Mr K Street discussed the requirement for the South Midlands Group grant to be more than the current £1,750 due to rises in charges. The Controller will speak to the finance committee to discuss raising the grants for the South Midlands, North West and Scotland Groups.

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

6. The Controller presented the Benevolence Report for the 6 month period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2019.

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

- The unaudited amount spent on benevolence cases for the period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2019 was £138,816.91, which is £8,243.79 less than the same period in 2018.
- There have been 68 declined cases for the period 1 Jan – 30 June 2019, which is 57 more than the same period in 2018. The majority of the 308 cases in this period are new cases
- The Controller also discussed how difficult it is to identify clients who are in need, but he

is encouraged that reaching out to veterans was improving. There is also an increase in supporting Serving Soldiers and Reservists, especially Foreign and Commonwealth soldiers who require assistance for flights to attend funerals and to obtain British Citizenship.

- The Controller discussed the Kitchener fund and that it had not been used for 10 years but has been activated twice this year with grants to dependants of deceased Royal Engineers. Two more cases have also been earmarked.
- The awareness and benefits of the REA by Serving Soldiers was discussed and it was felt that this was happening at certain levels but can still be improved. The Controller confirmed that some Welfare Officers in units are really linked in with how the REA work. However these needs to happen in all units.

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

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

9. The Corps Colonel gave a Report on the Corps and was able to update the committee on the current situation with Army recruiting and that the recruiting campaign was going well.

10. The report is at Annex B.

#### **ITEM 5 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE RECRUITING COMMITTEE**

The Controller gave a brief on the Recruiting Committee and the following points were discussed:

- The Controller showed the two short animation clips that have been produced and are on YouTube, Facebook and the REA website. Branches have also used them at events. One more is in the pipeline and these were the idea of serving soldiers from 3 RSME Regt who attended the Recruiting Committee as observers.
- The Controller discussed that the Recruiting Committee have had some good ideas which have included Themed branches, National Branches, and the use of social media. Serving observers on the recruiting committee has been good news.
- WO1 (RSM) Hough has a soldier who is good with social media and he would like him to be an observer on the next recruiting committee. The Asst Controller will liaise with the RSM to ensure this happens.
- The following was discussed; Branch information cards and posters to advertise the branches. The Asst Controller will speak to the printer about the information cards and the posters will be discussed at the next Recruiting Meeting.

The Controller gave a brief on the Recruiting Committee and the following points were discussed:

**Action: HQ REA** will ensure the points raised above are actioned.

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

11. The Corps Treasurer briefed the members on the submission of Branch Financial Summaries, which were received for FY 2018. The Corps Treasurer said he was pleased with the accuracy of most of the Branch Financial Summaries and the success of Branch Audit submissions. However, there 2 forms not returned and one form incomplete. These branches would be part of the desk top audit next year. The Controller is looking at making the form an electronic document which will be easier to complete.

12. The Controller discussed Group grants and has been asked by the South Midland, North West and Scotland Group to have their Grants increased. The Controller will take this request to the Finance Committee.

13.. Since the meeting the Asst Controller has been looking at the Financial Summaries of the Groups that have asked for an increase of the Grant to see what their yearly expenditure was. It must be noted that the South Midlands Group was one of the Groups who did not return the 2018 financial summary.

**Action: HQ REA** will ensure the points raised above are actioned.

#### **ITEM 7 – TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE AGENDA FOR THE 2019 AGM**

14. The Controller said it was a standard AGM agenda but suggested that other Items can be added. WO1 (RSM) D Jones discussed direction, strategy and communications and how he is linking serving soldiers with Veterans by inviting Cpls to REA meetings and inviting Veterans to Pass off Parades at 3 RSME Regt. The RSM will send details of pass off parades to HQ REA so they can be made available to all Branches and he would be available to discuss this as an agenda point at the AGM. Direction, strategy and communications to be added to the AGM agenda.

15. The Committee considered the draft 2019 AGM Agenda and, subject to the agreed change, recommended the Agenda to Council.

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

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

**Carried**

#### **ITEM 8 – REA STRATEGY**

16. 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. This is currently in a transition period with final posts to be filled
- 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 to serving soldiers, veterans and dependents
- How to reach the homeless and most vulnerable veterans. There is a big idea, which cannot be discussed at present as it is with Board and should we on the agenda at the AGM.
- Welfare was discussed in depth and in the real world a SSAFA trained welfare officer in each branch would be ideal. Guides for Benevolence is on the REA website but will be put in the next HQ Circular. However all cases must be referred to a SSAFA or TRBL caseworker and a Form A is to be completed.

#### **ITEM 9 – NEW WELFARE GRANT**

17. The Controller explained how the welfare grant was progressing for 2019 and the following points were discussed:

- 48 applications have been applied for at a cost of over £683,000 and so far, just over £190,000 has been spent. Some of the items include Campervans, Gazebo's, Museum touring exhibition equipment, Wi-Fi in museum and Lightweight Scarlet coats of the RE In-Pensioners at The Royal Hospital Chelsea. The final cut-off date for applications is the 15 August 2019
- Furnishings for the common rooms in the Single living accommodation at 22 Engr Regt will be discussed next week.
- Army welfare services and other charities are to be also used to fund these projects.

#### **ITEM 10 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

18. The following other business was discussed:

- Mr Tony Webb discussed Branch Welfare Officers training to meet present day legislation. The Controller explained that the strategy from the REA is that professional training is with SSAFA and that any branch welfare officers should go down that route. If any branch welfare officers require speaking to a SSAFA case worker about this role then Rick Tootle is happy to discuss this matter with them.
- Mike Payne discussed about the calling notice not being sent to branch secretaries in his Group. The Controller said that it is important that all information is sent out to branches. The Asst Controller can confirm that the Minley calling notice went out on the 4 April 2019 to all Group Secretaries and they were asked to send out to all their branches.
- It was also discussed by Mike Payne that he was having problems opening documents from HQ REA. The Asst Controller will speak to Mike Payne about this.
- Graham Doherty discussed Care after Combat and asked if any branches had any veterans who may wish to become mentors for Project Phoenix to contact him.
- Steve Lipscombe would like to inform the Management Committee that the Doncaster REA will join with the Wakefield REA at 2020 events such as Armed Forces day and REA Recruitment opportunities.
- Last meeting for Mike Payne and Graham Doherty and the Controller thanked them for all their hard work and contribution during the 6 years they have been on the committee.
- Rick Tootle discussed the change over the Captain of Standards at the Chatham Corps memorial weekend and will send information of the process to HQ REA.
- RSM 1 RSME Regt updated the committee on the Corps memorial weekend.

#### **ITEM 11. – Date of next Meeting.**

19. The date and location of the next meeting is scheduled for 1230hrs 23 January 2020 and held at 3 RSME Regt Gibraltar Barracks, Minley.

19 July 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  
July 2019**

1. **Trends 2019.** For the period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2019 the number of benevolence cases submitted to the Association by SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and other organisations was 308, this is 30 cases more than for 2018 (278 cases). There are significantly more cases declined in this period.

2. **Individual Benevolence Cases Considered during Jan – Jun 2019 (Excludes Weekly Allowances and Christmas Grants)**

Category	2019 Jan - Jun	2018 Jan - Jun	2017 Jan - Jun	2016 Jan - Jun
Disabled & Illness	33	79	73	78
Aged	14	23	12	24
Widows	18	34	16	26
Unemployed	31	71	60	57
Miscellaneous	144	60	68	63
Grants not made	68	11	21	51
<b>Totals</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>270</b>

Regular – Reserve Case Comparisons	2019 Jan - Jun	2018 Jan - Jun	2017 Jan - Jun	2016 Jan - Jun
Regular Cases	229	234	540	605
Reservist Cases	11	33	27	45
Regular Grants	£125,663.36	£131,204.70	£180,383	£130,645.80
Reservist Grants	£13,153.55	£15,856	£6,262	£5,565

3. **Cost of Benevolence Cases Jan to Jun 2019.** The unaudited amount spent on benevolence cases for the period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2019 was £131,816.91. This is £8,243.79 less than the same period in 2018.

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 £50k, the grant to SSAFA would be increased from £20k.

RHQ RE/Update/REA/03/19  
14 Jun 19


**REA Management Committee**  
**RHQ RE UPDATE - AS AT 14 Jun 19**

1. **Headlines.** The Corps remains very busy however it has found time for sporting excellence, engagement across the Normandy 75 week and running a significant number of battlefield studies. The NMA event was excellent; thank you to the REA. Additionally, 1500 Sappers took part in the Sapper Games at RAF Wyton (home of 42 Engr Regt (Geo)) last week. Despite horizontal rain, it was a fantastic festival of sport for all; and again, thank you to the REA for support through the provision of prizes/trophies. As reported at Council some four weeks ago, my take with respect to the external view of the Corps is: **Professional, Credible, Hardworking and Forward thinking.** Recruiting and retention remains the highest priority; in unit manning is a growing concern. The current recruiting campaign is starting to deliver green shoots however retention still needs to be invigorated; more can be done - we must all sell the quality of our Sappers and the Sapper Family.

2. **Manning.** The current manning picture is below. Compared to other Corps and Infantry Bns, we are OK but.....more must be done to close the NCO gaps/delta. The Corps HQ is playing a very active role in marginal gains; every Sapper really does count.

WORKFORCE POSITION AS AT 01 APR 19									
		Officers							
RE Officers	OF4	OF3	OF2	OF1	Total				
Liability	151	373	449	144	1117				
Strength	165	378	408	147	1098				
Delta	14	5	-41	3	-19				
% Manning	109%	101%	91%	102%	99%				
		OR9	OR8	OR7	OR6	OR4	OR3	OR2	Totals
RE Soldiers									
Liability	105	358	563	597	1131	1478	2199	6431	
Strength	100	350	556	576	912	1190	2110	5794	
Delta	-5	-8	-7	-21	-219	-288	-89	-637	
% Manning	95%	98%	99%	97%	80%	81%	96%	90%	
		OR9	OR8	OR7	OR6	OR4	OR3	OR2	Totals
QGE Soldiers									
Liability		5	13	18	49	72	134	291	
Strength		6	16	33	56	75	91	277	
Delta		1	3	15	7	3	-43	-14	
% Manning		120%	123%	183%	114%	104%	67%	95%	
		Lt	Capt	Maj	Lt Col	Total			
FR20 Officers									
Liability	203	182	124	34	543				
Strength	106	188	149	46	489				
		Spr	LCpl	Cpl	Sgt	SSgt	WO2	WO1	Total
FR20 Soldiers									
Liability	1127	441	378	219	184	96	19	2464	
Strength	1013	347	235	127	159	129	41	2051	

Reference: Army Personnel Statistics Report April 2019



3. **Operations.** The Corps SM will cover; separate brief.

4. **Growth.** 28 Engr Regt (C-CBRN) is now at initial operating capability. 23 Amph Sqn (Germany based) will form up in summer 2019 and be based in Sennelager (c121 pax).

5. **Snr Offrs.** The Corps continues to generate high quality Snr Offrs. By summer 2019 we will have Sappers in post as:



- • Comd Field Army (3\*)
- • Comd Home Command (3\*)
- • Deputy CGS (3\*)
- • Comd NATO Izmir (3\*)

**Additionally** - the next Comdt RMAS/GOC ARTIC will also be a Sapper on promotion (2\*).

6. **Comms/Media.** Coherent comms/media across the Sapper Family remains a battle; the limited resource in RHQ RE is doing a fine job. Plans are in place to expand the Corps Comms/Media reach and platforms, and the REA is supportive of the approach we plan to take; thank you. Feedback on the The Sapper Magazine would be appreciated as we refine the product.

7. **Staffing.** The new Corps SM (WO1 Paul Clark RE) took post on Fri 14 Jun 19; he will be present at the meeting. Capt Steve Webster RE has now moved to HQ 12 (FS) Engr Gp. The Corps Secretary, Charles Holman will retire in Dec 19, and Secretary InstRE, Nigel Montague, will be replaced in Oct 19.

8. **Corps Events of Significant Interest:**

- • **15 Sep 19.** Corps Memorial Day (now a single day @ Chatham) but linked into the Chatham REA weekend (14/15 Sep 19).
- • **28 Nov 19.** RE Awards Dinner @ ICE London.

**Corps Col RE**