

The Royal Engineers Association

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

Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



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All management committee members
All Group Secretaries
All Branch Secretaries
Controller REA
Corps Treasurer

30 September 2019

Minutes of the first meeting of the Royal Engineers Association Board of Trustees held at RBLI Headquarters on Friday 06 September 2019

(Full 62-page transcript of the meeting is available from HQ REA.)

PRESENT

Maj Gen Alistair S Dickinson CBE	President REA	AD
Col Matt Quare MBE ADC	Corps Colonel	MQ
Col (Retd) Chris M Davies MBE	REA Hon Treasurer	CD
Lt Col (Retd) Larry Inge	National Branches	LI
Mr Eric Hargreaves	Local Branches	EH
Lt Col Martin Heffer RE TD	Reserve Army Officer	MH
Lt Col Claire James RE	Group Director	CJ
Mr Jeffrey Jupp	External Trustee Governance	JJ
Mr Colin Basnett	External Trustee Service Charity	CB
Mrs Jane Thomson	External Trustee Wider Community	JT
Mr Brian Simm	Themed Branches	BS
WO1 Paul Clark	Corps SM	PC

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Kenneth M Kirk	Controller REA and Secretary	KK
Maj (Retd) Ian Sidebottom	Corps Treasurer	IS

APOLOGIES

Brig (Retd) Andy S Craig OBE	Chairman REA	AC
Maj (Retd) Iain George	Assistant Controller REA	IG

ITEM 1.0 Introduction of Board members – outline of Trustee duties and structure of the board

AD outlined the history of the Association Council and the reasons for change to the Board of Trustees. He highlighted the need to professionalise the board, its strategic role and the duty of the Trustees to challenge and discuss the issues that are presented or arise.

AD introduced the new board members and their specific roles within the board structure. Explaining the roles of the National, Local and Themed trustees in representing the members of the Association. The role of the Group director as a CO in understanding the direct links between the veterans and the serving Corps. He explained the roles of each of the External trustees in bringing a new skill set to the board covering Governance, the wider community particularly those in prison or facing other challenges, a trustee with experience of other service charities to enable us to bench mark our performance and decisions.

Action: KK circulate the contact numbers amongst board members

ITEM 2.0 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The President drew the boards attention to the declaration of conflicts of interest paperwork that they had already received and asked the trustees to declare any conflicts they may have. He advised that this issue would no longer be raised at every meeting and that it was the responsibility of each trustee to identify any conflicts to the board when they arise.

Action: KK record any conflicts of interest identified in future.

ITEM 3.0 and 4.0 to confirm the minutes of the 74th Council and consider matters arising from the proceedings of the 74th Meeting of Council

The President asked the board to approve the minutes of the 74th Council this was agreed. The President then reviewed the matters arising:

Item 7 – reviewing opportunities for sustainable welfare projects this related to today's visit to the RBLI as an example of an opportunity to invest in a sustainable welfare project. Action Closed

Item 12 – the management committee would approve Development of Themed branches the Controller explained that approval of the themed was agreed at the last Council and branches. Action Closed

Item 12 – Review of the Structure of the Management Committee – Action KK / Peter Luscombe on going – report outcome in 2020.

REA income and expenditure correct typo on the minutes should read £1198487.

Action KK to prepare amended minutes for AD to sign

ITEM 5 .0 - To take note of the proceedings of the 131st meeting of the Management Committee

The Board had the opportunity to read minutes of the committee there were no matters arising. AD drew attention to page 27 Item 3 and asked if there were any metrics in place to measure the effectiveness of the REA in raising its profile amongst the serving Corps. The Controller explained that where unit welfare officers were fully engaged with the REA those units would receive more support giving the example of 26 Engr Regt. CJ identified that the normal route to contact with the REA was through the RSM, PC stated that both the UWO and RSM would be good links to the REA and that he would promote this through the RSM's group. KK suggested that UWO should attend the REA Benevolence Committee meetings. MQ suggested annual meetings with UWO and REA perhaps at Minley or Chatham.

Action: PC to drive through RSM group and KK to invite UWO to benevolence meetings, KK to liaise with MQ arranging a meeting with all UWO.

ITEM 6.0 - To note the Report on Benevolence

In the absence of the chair of the benevolence committee AD invited the KK to give an update on benevolence. He advised the committee that expenditure was slightly down on forecast for the year

and that the type of cases being handled were widely spread across all sections of the Corps family and spread throughout the country and overseas from Fiji to Zimbabwe to Ecuador. The Kitchener fund had been utilised on three occasions this year following a period of 6 years with no activity. Claire James requested information on the Gabriel Trust and this prompted discussion about its use, with less than £3000 remaining in the fund.

Action KK/IS to confirm the status of the Fund for next meeting

ITEM 7.0 - To receive a report on Corps Affairs

The Corps Col presented a brief report on Corps Affairs. In response to the report, there was discussion around the REA support of the Sapper Games, other sports, and adventure training to ensure that where appropriate the REA brand is visible and clear. Members of the board expressed ideas on various promotional ideas and how this should be communicated to the wider Corps. Trustees also raised the issue of measuring the success of our recruitment and engagement activities, it was agreed that the Controller should bring these to the attention of the Recruitment and Management Committees and develop an impact report to show how effective we are being at engaging with the wider Corps family.

Action Controller to work with Comms hub to ensure REA support is clearly visible.

ITEM 8.0 - To note the Minutes of the 121st REA Finance Committee

The Honorary Treasurer (CD) drew the Boards attention to his report and proposed budget, which had already been circulated.

CD highlighted the welfare expenditure had been £250K in the past year and proposed reducing this to £50K in the light of the transfer of £130K's worth of budget costs from RECCT. Following considerable discussion, the board approved the following points

Welfare Grant for 2020 to be £100,000
Proposer CD
Secunder AD

Action; KK to prepare welfare grant offer to regiments and branches for 2020

ITEM 9.0 - Update on 2018 Budget (FOO) and Valuation of REA (AFCIF) Investment

The Corps Treasurer (IS) outlined individual expenditure items in the budget and our current investments, which have retained a strong level of return

ITEM 10 .0 – Proposed additional REA funding responsibilities

Following the Honorary, treasurer's report and presentation of the Budget and Investment Valuation the board discussed the £130k realignment of expenditure from RECCT to REA. The breakdown of this was provided in the budget.

The board voted unanimously to approve the £130,000 realignment of funding responsibility from RECCT.
Proposer CB
Secunder EH

Action IS and KK to oversee the additional expenditure.

ITEM 11.0 - To receive a report on the REA Welfare Grant 2019

As the 2020, Welfare grant had been approved under ITEM 8.0 the Welfare Grant report for 2019 was taken as read to allow additional time for the discussion of ITEM 12.

ITEM 12.0 Grant proposal to RBLI

The president introduced the proposal to reduce our reserve to around 8-9 years of reserves releasing up to £2 million. This had previously agreed by the REA Council as a target to be achieved over a 4-5 year period. During previous discussions

KK outlined the RBLI proposal, which had already been circulated to all members of the Board, the board, had also had the opportunity to visit the facilities and meet with staff and residents. The proposal before the board was to invest up to £2m into the RBLI development at Aylesford to provide support across a wide range of services to Sappers in need. This includes rehabilitation, housing, employment, homelessness, supported living, elderly and dementia care and critical care. The funds would be used to provide a number of new flats in a housing block and would give Sappers access to support across all the areas.

AD invited comment from all the trustees.

JT – if we do not do this, what we do, what are the benefits, how many Royal Engineers – 500 – 600 veterans and families going through re-training, JT felt that clearer information on the current support by RBLI of sapper veterans was required. 289 beds to getting 10% we would need 30 people to be using the facility to achieve a 10% share we would need 50 to 60 Sappers involved. Sapper house not filled with Sappers

CD felt as sappers do better in general we have less demand on this type

M H – rather randomised route to RBLI if we were marketing would our numbers increased

JJ– not entirely clear that we are acting in accordance with our aims ran through the aims Felt that only aim B we can donate as long as we are in accordance with this.

PC felt that it would be difficult to justify to the serving Corps committing £2m to a single project.

LI felt that there should be a stronger definition of the actual support that would be provided from RBLI if we were to invest in the project.

CJ felt that there should be further discussion and negotiation with RBLI and questioned if £2million was really the correct level of commitment to be making to this particular project.

Following considerable discussion AD concluded this item by requesting that an alternative proposal is investigated and brought back to the board within 6 months for further consideration and that KK should have further discussions with Steve Sherry CEO of RBLI

Action KK by next meeting

AD requested that the board decide on legal advice on the conditions of our objects and if they would allow us to make the type of grant that has been proposed

Proposer JJ
Secunder CJ

Action; JJ to seek legal advice KK to liaise and distribute the advice.

ITEM 13.0 - AGM and Sapper Sunday

The Controller reminded all to confirm attendance at the AGM and annual dinner at the VSC on Saturday 12 October 2019 and Sapper Sunday at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 13 Oct 2019

ITEM 14.0 AOB

It was agreed that all AOB had been raised during the earlier discussion in the meeting

ITEM 15.0 - Date of next meeting

Propose 1100 on Friday 17 January at the Royal Hospital Chelsea please confirm attendance