

The Royal Engineers Association

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Patron: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



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See Distribution

31 July 2020

MINUTES OF THE 133rd MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, HELD ON BOARDABLE ON THURSDAY 16th JULY 2020

PRESENT

Mr Kenneth Kirk	REA Controller – Chairman
Col M Quare MBE	Corps Colonel
Lt Col M Heffer RE TD	Reserve Officer
WO1 (RSM) T Hough	170 (Infra Sp) Engr Gp
Lt Col (Retd) P Taylor	Airborne Engineers Branch
Mr J Allerhead	London Group
Mr A Bulmer TD	North West Group
Mr M Forder	Eastern Group
Mr K Street	South Midlands Group
Mr R Tootle	Central Scotland Group

IN ATTENDANCE

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

APOLOGIES

Maj I Higgingbotham	HQ RE
WO1 (RSM) B Tulett	1 RSME Regt
WO1 (RSM) P Westoby	3 RSME Regt
Mr D Bardsley	South East Group
Mr D Pinder	Central Southern Group
Mr S Lipscombe	North Midlands Group
Mr K Gover	South West Central Group
Mr T Webb	South Wales Group
Mr D Ormsby	East Anglia Group

1. The Controller opened the meeting and welcomed those present.
2. The Controller noted that apologies had been received from those listed above. The controller mentioned that as this is a Zoom meeting, some members are dropping in and out with connection issues; we have to accept this and cannot influence issues with broadband connections.

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

ITEM 1 - TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE 132nd MEETING

4. The Committee accepted that the Minutes of the 132nd Meeting were a true record of the proceedings. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Proposed by: Mr R Tootle

Seconded: Mr J Allerhead

Carried

ITEM 2 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 132nd MEETING

5. Item 9: Steve Lipscombe asked for an update on the refurbishment of the Inglis Bridge. The Controller has spoken to the museum curator, this will happen, and the Inglis Bridge will be put on a plinth. However, there are many changes happening with the Museum, which includes moving the library and maintaining the vehicle displays, which will be carried out by Branches and Regiments.

6. Item 10: Keith Gover's term on the Management Committee has been extended for another year.

7. Item 11: The list of Motorhomes held by Regt's has not been collated for the next HQ Circular due to lockdown. The Controller mentioned that the motorhomes at 39 Engr Regt were well used but the motorhomes at 21 Engr Regt were not as popular for various reasons.

8. Item 11: Mr T Webb has asked for REA rule 14.01 to be changed, which has now happened.

ITEM 3 – TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENCE COMMITTEE

9. The Controller presented the Benevolence Report for the 6 month period ending 30 June 2020 and discussed the following areas:

- The unaudited amount spent on benevolence cases for the period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2020 was £138,376, which is £440.91 less than the same period in 2019. The Budget for 2020 will stay at £300,000
- There have been 265 cases submitted to the Association and 37 declined cases during the period 1 Jan – 30 June 2020. The majority of the 265 cases in this period are new cases. Support has been in the UK and worldwide with clients in Ecuador, Cambodia, Spain, Germany and Cyprus to name a few.
- The Controller also discussed that from the REA point of view Benevolence has continued as normal during lockdown. The Controller also discussed that cases have been lower during lockdown but expected a surge in cases once we are back to normal. He also noted that the REA are working closely with Welfare Officers to support serving soldiers but is advising the welfare officers to go down the SSAFA route, as other military charities will then be involved.
- Mr K Street thanked the committee for their work on Benevolence and asked for this to be in the minutes. He also asked if there was a surge in cases whether the Benevolence budget would be increased. The Controller confirmed that the Benevolence budget would be increased if required.

10. The report is at Annex A.

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

11. The Corps Colonel gave a report on the Corps and was able to update the committee on the current situation with COVID 19 which the Corps was heavily involved with. Troops coming back from abroad who are now starting to go back overseas and Army recruiting and retention was also discussed.

12. 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 discussed the success of the Branch information cards and 32 branches have now ordered cards.
- The live videos that were going to be produced, have not happened due to COVID 19 and this will commence later in the year.
- The Recruiting Committee is also looking for other ideas to reach out to REA members.
- Mr K Street asked if the branches that are thriving and successful in recruiting members could share how they do this. It was mentioned how successful the presentations from the Solent Branch was during lockdown. The Controller will ask the successful branches to send an email on how their recruiting has improved.
- Mr R Tootle also explained that his branch had a beer night on a Friday on Zoom during the lockdown. This event was successful in gaining new members and helping the mental health of the branch members who attended.
- The Controller mentioned the initiative run by 170 (Infra Sp) Engineer Group who had 20 tablet computers granted from the welfare fund; these were shared with branch members and serving soldiers to improve links and communications. All branches could adopt this to ensure correct systems of communications are in place.

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

ITEM 6- FINANCIAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL SUMMARIES UPDATE

13. The Corps Treasurer briefed the members on the asset valuations, which included the cash reserves, investments and dividends. He then discussed the financial report which included the overspends and underspends so far this year. The Corps Treasurer confirmed the REA financial situation is very healthy; however with changes to the size of the Corps, the Day's Pay Scheme will need to be monitored next year.

14. The Controller discussed the cost of events and confirmed that that money not used this year would not roll over to next year's events. Money will not be used for the sake of it but events could be improved if this is justified. The cost of Group grants was discussed and the Corps Treasurer will get back to the committee to confirm why there was an overspend of £30,000.

15. The Controller discussed the Financial Summaries and was disappointed with 50% of Branch returns and 70% of Group returns that needed modifying before they could be submitted. Next year's forms will be an electronic version, which will stop the wrong information being included on the form and will be easier to complete.

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

ITEM 7 – TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THE AGENDA FOR THE 2020 AGM

16. The Controller said it was a standard AGM agenda but suggested that other Items can be added.

17. The Controller confirmed that there will be an AGM planned for October but due to restrictions, it will be in a Zoom format for attendees. The AGM is required for legal requirements and governance.

18. The Committee considered the draft 2020 AGM Agenda and recommended the Agenda to Council.

Proposed: Mr K Street

Seconded: Mr R Tootle

Carried

ITEM 8 – REA STRATEGY

19. The Controller explained the REA Strategy and covered the following:

20. The President is always pushing the REA's ability to reach out to as many people as possible as he thinks we are still missing the most vulnerable RE veterans who need our help. Good communications, membership and visibility should get us known to all who need our help. Having links with charities such as RBLI and supporting the Ocean rowing team who are collecting for RBLI (a charity we support where the most vulnerable veterans live) can only help the cause. The message on how the REA can help veterans must be sent out in all formats so we can support the most vulnerable RE veterans wherever they are.

ITEM 9 – NEW WELFARE GRANT

21. The Controller explained how the welfare grant was progressing for 2020 and the following points were discussed:

- The Welfare grant for this year is £100,000 and applications close on the 31 August 2020.
- To date £20,000 has been spent on small and individual projects. The figure is low due to lockdown as Branches and Regiments have not been around. However, the REA has been promoting the Welfare grant and encouraging Branches and Regiments to apply - more applications are expected before the closing date.

ITEM 10 – EVENTS

22. Events for 2020 and 2021 were discussed.

- The Asst Controller discussed that all events for 2020 are now cancelled apart from TRBL events, which are the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the 5 November and Remembrance at Whitehall on the 8 November 2020. However, final details have not been finalised for these events.
- The Controller discussed dates for 2021 and a full programme of all meeting dates is at Annex C. Some face-to-face meetings may be arranged, but remote involvement with meetings will continue for the present time.

- A list of other events for 2021 is below but some dates and locations need to be confirmed. This information will also be in the next HQ Circular.

April	Army v RAF Rugby Kingsholm Gloucester
May	Army v Navy Rugby Twickenham
14 –16 May	Gibraltar Weekend
29 May	Trooping the Colour - Major General's Review
03 June	Royal Hospital Chelsea Founder's Day Parade
5 June	Trooping the Colour – Colonel's Review
09 & 10 June	Beating Retreat, London
12 June	Queen's Birthday Parade
June	Chilwell Weekend*
July	Minley Weekend*
September	Corps Memorial Weekend*
09 October	REA AGM and Annual Dinner*
10 October	Sapper Sunday at Royal Hospital Chelsea
11 November	Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
14 November	Remembrance Sunday

*National Events

- The Controller is also keen for other suitable events to be organised to get members together like the NMA event last year. Ideas to the Controller from Groups and Branches.

ITEM 11 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. The Controller asked for any final points from the committee and the following was covered by the Asst Controller:

- Due to the Corps memorial Weekend being cancelled, the Controller would like the National Standard Bearer Mr D Hadfield to continue until September 2021.

Proposed by: Corps Colonel

Seconded: Mr R Tootle

Carried

- Now on the REA website there is a new REA Benevolence Handbook and information on Group Directors duties.
- The following Elected members will require re-election for a further 3 years and the Group Secretaries will be contacted reference this matter.
 - Mr J Allerhead London Group
 - Mr D Ormsby East Anglia Group
 - Mr R Tootle Scotland & NI Group
 - Mr P Taylor Airborne Engineers

24. The Controller closed the meeting and said the issues with connections will be improved as we go forward with future meetings.

ITEM 12. – Date of next Meeting.

25. The date and location of the next meeting is scheduled for 1000hrs 14 January 2021 on Zoom.

31 July 2020

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 2020**

1. **Trends 2020.** For the period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2020 the number of benevolence cases submitted to the Association by SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and other organisations was 265, this is 43 cases less than for the same period in 2019 (308 cases). There are 37 cases declined in this period.

2. **Individual Benevolence Cases Considered during Jan – Jun 2020 (Excludes Weekly Allowances and Christmas Grants)**

Category	2020 Jan - Jun	2019 Jan - Jun	2018 Jan - Jun	2017 Jan - Jun
Disabled & Illness	85	33	79	73
Aged	4	14	23	12
Widows	18	18	34	16
Unemployed	69	31	71	60
Miscellaneous	52	144	60	68
Grants not made	37	68	11	21
Totals	265	308	278	250

Regular – Reserve Case Comparisons	2020 Jan - Jun	2019 Jan - Jun	2018 Jan - Jun	2017 Jan - Jun
Regular Cases	220	229	234	219
Reservist Cases	8	11	33	20
Regular Grants	£132,483.06	£125,663.36	£131,204.70	£108,383
Reservist Grants	£5892.94	£13,153.55	£15,856	£6,262

3. **Cost of Benevolence Cases Jan to 30 Jun 2020.** The unaudited amount spent on benevolence cases for the period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2020 was £138,376. This is £440.91 less than the same period in 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, decisions on grants can be made quickly and processed within a week. The out of committee procedures 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 2020, the grant to ABF would be £50k, the grant to SSAFA would be £20k.

RHQ RE/Update/REA/01/2
16 Jul 20
REA Management Committee
RHQ RE UPDATE - AS AT 16 Jul 20

REA MAN BOARD – 16 JUL 20

For brevity and ease I offer the following as an RHQ RE Update:

- **Workforce.** The Corps remains c700 SP short, but improvements are starting to be seen. As a result of COVID19 measures the Corps has retained and gained c150 SP through workforce measures. This is good news for the immediate future.
- **COVID-19.** Elements of 63 Wks Gp, 32ER and 39ER remain committed to Op RESCRIPT. Defence has c4000 SP committed. The Corps success is vested in G5 Planners into SJC(UK), the Nightingale Hosp and Mobile Testing. The ELSC played a significant part early in the campaign. Much of the overseas garrisons were withdrawn to UK and remain dispersed.
- **Operations.** 2072 Force Elements (FE)s are committed across 19 countries conducting 9 UK Ops and 10 Overseas Ops (78 SP deployed overseas), in a total of 64 commitments.
- **Training.** Basic training continued during COVID-19 and has started to ramp up again at both Minley and Chatham, in addition to Fd Army exercises be it localised or on the wider Army estate. There will be no overseas activity till at least 01 Oct 20.
- **Corps Events.** All have been cancelled up to mid Oct 20. The next events will be the Corps Guest Night followed by the Corps Awards Dinner on 26 Nov 20. Work is in progress to populate a 2021 calendar; please support.
- **Follow The Sapper Ed2.** On track to publish in late Sep 20. The book will retail through The Sapper Shop – www.sappershop.com. Pre order discounts will be available; details to follow.
- **Sapper Beer.** Pin In is now on sale via the Crafty Brewing Company - <https://www.craftybrewing.co.uk/>

Regards - Matt

Colonel Matt QUARE MBE ADC | Corps Col RE, RHQ RE, Ravelin Building, Brompton Barracks, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4UG

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REA COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021

Date of Meeting	Meeting	Venue	Room/Location	Time
January 2021	REA Trustee meeting	Zoom		1000
14 January 2021	REA Management meeting	Zoom		1000
10 March 2021	REA Recruiting meeting	Zoom		1000
16 March 2021	REA Benevolence meeting	Zoom		1000
May 2021	REA Trustee meeting	Zoom		1000
15 June 2021	REA Benevolence meeting	Zoom		1000
15 July 2021	REA Management meeting	Zoom		1000
14 September 2021	REA Benevolence meeting	Zoom		1000
September	REA Trustee meeting	Zoom		1000
09 October 2021	REA AGM	Zoom		1600
27 October 2021	REA Recruiting meeting	Zoom		1000
11 November 2021	TRBL Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey	London	Approx 1030
14 November 2021	Remembrance Sunday Cenotaph Parade	Cenotaph	London	0900
08 December 2021	REA Benevolence meeting	Zoom		1000